THE IMITATION OR FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

Translated out of the Latine Copy

BY

THOMAS A KEMPIS

Regular Canonink.

Printed at ROHAN, in the yeare 1658.

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THE MOST DEVOUT PRAYERS OF St. BRIGITTE,

Touching the most holy Passion of

OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

Composed by the aforesaid Saint, by instinct of the Holy Ghost.

Printed at *Antwerp*, in the year 1659.

THE PRAYERS OF St. BRIGITTE

To be said in honour of the sacred Wounds of our Saviour.

I.

Most sweet Lord Jesus Christ, eternall sweetnesse of those who love thee, joy above alle joy and desire, firme hope of the hopeless, solace of the sorrowful, and most merciful lover of all penitent sinners, who hast said thy *delights is to be with the sons of men*, for the love of whom thou didst assume humane nature in the fulnesse of time, remember, most sweet Lord Jesus, alle those sharp sorrows which transpierced thy sacred soul, from the first instant of thy Incarnation, until the

time, of thy ſolitary paſſion, pre-ordained from all eternity ; remember, O moſt amiable Saviour, all thoſe bitter anguiſhes thou didſt ſuffer, when at thy laſt ſupper thou didſt waſh the feet of thy Diſciples, didſt feed them with the ſacred banquet of thy pretious body and blood, and moſt ſweetly comforting them, didſt foretell them thy inſuing paſſion ; after which, going to Mount-Olivet, thou ſaidſt, *My ſoul is ſorrowful unto death*; Remember, I beſeech thee, O moſt ſweet Saviour, that bitter grief and anguiſh, which thy ſacred ſoul did ſuffer, when praying three ſeveral times to thy heavenly Father, thou didſt ſweat water & blood, thou wert betrayed by thy own Diſciple, apprehended by thy choſen people, accuſed by falſe witneſſes, unjuſtly judged by three Judges, and in thy elected City, in the paſchal ſolemnity, in

the flouriſhing age of thy youth were wrongfully condemned, bound, beaten, ſpurned, ſpit upon, diſpoyled of thy own garments, and clothed with others in ſcorn; wert blindfolded, buffeted, ſpit upon again, bound naked to a pillar, moſt cruelly ſcourged, crowned with thornes, ſtruck with a reed, and afflicted with innumerable other torments, pains, and injuries; O my moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, by the memory and merit of all theſe bitter pains and anguiſhes before thy laſt expiration to the Croſſe vouchſafe to grant me before my death, true contrition, entire confeſſion, a flowing fountain of tears, full ſatisfaction, and plenary remiſſion of all my ſins *Amen.*

O moſt gracious Lord Jeſus, be propitious to me a ſinner. **Pater noſter Ave Maria.**

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, true liberty of Angels, and paradiſe of delights, remember I beſeech thee, that grief and ſorrow which thou didſt ſuffer, when thy cruell enemies like fierce lyons, with furious and dreadful looks, compaſſing thee round about, did tare off thy hair, ſpit upon thy ſacred face, ſcratch, beat, and buffet thee, and with all manner of unheard injuries, outrages and torments, did moſt cruelly and baſely blaſpheme, ſcorn, and affront thee. O moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, by all thoſe moſt barbarous and inhumane outrages which thou didſt ſuffer, vouchſafe to deliver me from all my enemies viſible and inviſible, that protected under the ſhadow of thy wings, I may ſafely arrive at the port of eternal glory. *Amen.*

O moſt glorious Lord Ieſus Chriſt

be propitious to me a sinner. Patet noſter. Ave Maria.

III.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus omnipotent Creatour and Fabricatour of the world, and Repairer of mankinde, who containeſt both Heaven and Earth in thy hand, and whoſe immenſity no bounds can limit, remember I beſeech thee the bitter pains and anguiſhes which thou didſt endure, when the perfidious Jewes pierced thy delicate and tender hands and feet with rough and blunt nails, ſtreatching them forth ſo violently with cords to the holes, which they had made in the Croſſe: thus they heaped dolour upon dolour, moſt cruelly disjoynting all thy bones, breaking thy veynes, and renewing all thy facred wounds. O moſt ſweet Jeſus, by the memory of all theſe thy pains and torments on the

Croſſe, vouchſafe to give me thy fear and love, with perfect charity toward my neighbour. *Amen.*

O moſt pious Lord Ieſus be propitious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

IV.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, heavenly Phyſician of humane nature and eternal King, remember, I beſeech thee, all thoſe bitter pains and torments, which thou didſt endure in thy ſacred members, who being hoiſted up upon the Croſſe, with all thy precious body rent and torne, all thy bones being ſo disjoynted that not one remained in its right place, not having from the crown of thy head unto the ſoal of thy feet any part left whole, ſo that no dolour could be compared to thine: at which time being unmindful of thy own torments, thou didſt mercifully pray to thy heavenly

Father for thy cruel enemies, saying, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* O most meek and merciful Lord Jesus, by this thy admirable benignity, goodnesse, love and mercy; and by all thy bitter pains and torments, grant that the memory of thy dolorous Passion, may be to me a most powerful protection of my soul and body against all the deceits, temptations and molestations of the Devils my cruel enemies: *Amen.*

O most merciful Lord Jesus be propitious to me a sinner. Pater noster. Ave Maria.

V.

O Most sweet Lord Jesus, mirrour of eternal brightnesse, and wisdom of the omnipotent Father, remember the bitter grief and sorrow thy sacred soul did feel, when beholding in the clear mirrour of thy divine pre-

ſcience the predeſtination of thy elect, who through the merits of thy moſt wholſom Paſſion were to be ſaved, and the reprobation of the wicked who for their ingratitude were to be damned, and the abyſſe of thy immenſe mercy, by which thou didſt commiſerate and ſhed tears for us miſerable, loſt, and forlorn ſinners, and chiefly by that mercy, which thou didſt ſhew to the Thief upon the Croſſe, ſaying to him, *This day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe*. I beſeech thee, O moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, my Lord and my God, to ſhew the like mercy unto me, now and at the hour of my death. *Amen.*

O moſt ſweet Lord Ieſus be merciful unto me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

VI.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, omnipotent King, and moſt amiable

miable Friend, remember the bitter grief, and ſorrow thy ſacred ſoul did ſuffer, when being forſaken of all thy friends and acquaintance, thou didſt hang naked, rent and torne upon the Croſſe, not having any to comfort or compaſſionate thee, but only the glorious Virgin Mary thy Mother, who ſtanding under the Croſſe in the bitterneſſe of her ſoul, accompanied thee in all torments; unto whom thou didſt commend thy beloved Diſciple S. John in thy place, ſaying to her, *Woman behold thy Son*, and after to thy Diſciple, *Behold thy Mother*. O moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, by that ſword of ſorrow which did then tranſpierce her ſacred ſoul, and by the tender love and compaſſion wherewith thou didſt reſent the ſad ſufferances of thy ſorrowful Mother, have pitty and compaſſion on me; I beſeech thee my

deareſt Lord, and mercifully help, comfort, ſuccour and aſſiſt me in all my tribulations, adverſities, neceſſities, ſorrows, and ſufferances both ſpiritual and corporal, *Amen.*

O moſt excellent Lord Ieſus, be propitious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

VII.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, crown of joy, treaſure of felicity, ſweet ſource of conſolation, and unexhauſted fountain of mercy, who hanging upon the Croſſe, out of the moſt inflamed deſire thou hadſt of the ſalvation of our ſouls, ſaidſt, *I thirſt*; to wit, for the redemption of mankind: O deareſt Lord, by this thy ardent charity, inflame our hearts with thy holy love, enkindle our deſires to accompliſh diligently all good works, and wholly extinguiſh the heat of all evil concupi-

cupiſcences and worldly affecti
ons in me. *Amen.*

*O moſt excellent Lord Jeſus, be pro
pitious to me a ſinner.* Pater noſter
Ave Maria.

VIII.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, true
light of thoſe that believe in
thee, ſuavity of hearts and ſove-
raign ſolace of all faithful ſouls
by that bitter gall and eyſel thou
didſt taſt for us upon the Croſs
at the hour of thy death, grant u
miſerable ſinners grace, worthil
to receive at all times, and parti
cularly at the hour of our death
thy moſt precious Body an
Blood, that by the vertue of th
divine Banquet, and all other ſa
lutary Sacraments, we may be pr
ſerved from all evils, ſins, and pu
niſhments, and repleniſhed wi
all joy, ſecurely appear in thy d
vine preſence. *Amen.*

O moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, be pro

tious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

IX.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus: regal vertue, and mental Jubily, remember, I beſeech thee, thoſe exceſſive pains and anguiſhes thou didſt endure for us upon the Croſſe, when through the bitterneſſe of death and the impious blaſphemies, deriſions, ſcornes, and reproaches of the Jewes, with a loud voice and weeping eyes thou didſt cry to thy heavenly Father with this ſad complaint, *Eloi, Eloy, lamma ſabacthani!* that is to ſay, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* O moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, by this bitter torment ſorrow grief and anguiſh, vouchſafe I beſeech thee to have pitty on me: and ſuccour me in all my ſorrows ſufferances, and tribulations, and particularly the hour of my death: O then

my

my deareſt Lord and my God, vouchſafe to aſſiſt and ſuccour me, and do not forſake me I beſeech thee. *Amen.*

O moſt gracious Lord Ieſus, be propitious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter, Ave Maria.

X.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *beginning* and *ending* of all things, and mirrour of vertue, remember how from the crown of the head to the feet thou wert immerged in the deluge of thy dolorous paſſion, for the love of us vile ſinners. O my moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus by the length, breadth, greatneſs and multitude of thy ſacre wounds, take from me the lov of the world, and teach me by true and perfect charity, alway to keep thy holy laws and commandments. *Amen.*

O moſt wiſe Lord Ieſu, be propiti

to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

XI.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, ſoveraign Goodneſſe, eternal Beatitude of thy Saints, and moſt profound Abyſſe of mercy, by thy deep and dolorous wounds, which did not onely tranſpierce thy ſacred fleſh, but even thy bowels, and the marrow of thy bones: be merciful to me a miſerable ſinner, who am drowned in my ſins and iniquities, and hide me in thy ſacred wounds from the face of wrath, until thine indignation be paſt and appeaſed, *Amen.*

O moſt potent Lord Ieſus be propitious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

XII.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, mirrour of verity, pledge of Unity, and bound of charity, remember

member the innumerable multitude of thoſe painful wounds wherewith thou wert covered from head to foot, all thy moſt holy body being moſt cruelly rent and torn by the moſt impious, and dyed with thy precious Blood, all which moſt dreadfull dolours thou didſt endure for the love of us vile ſinners: O moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, what couldeſt thou do for us more than thou haſt done? O my moſt gracious Lord, engrave theſe thy dolours deeply in my heart, and write them there with thy precious Blood, that in them I may always read thy love and dolours ſo that the memory of thy painful paſſion may dayly be renewed in me, and my love increaſed towards thee, and I remain perpetually thankful to thy immenſe charity to the laſt periode of my life, until I come to enjoy thee my onely

dea

dear Lord and moſt deſired treaſure, abounding with all joy and felicity, which through thy goodneſſe be pleaſed to grant, O moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus *Amen.*

O moſt glorious Lord Jeſus Chriſt, be propitious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

XIII.

(-) Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, moſt victorious Lyon and invincible, triumphant and immortal King, remember, I beſeech thee, all the bitter pains and anguiſhes thou didſt endure, when all the forces of thy heart and body failing, bowing down thy ſacred head, thou ſaidſt, *It is conſummated:* O deareſt Lord, by theſe thy deadly dolours have mercy on me at my laſt paſſage, when my heart and ſoul ſhall be in anguiſh and anxiety. *Amen.*

O moſt noble Lord Jeſus, be propitious

tious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

XIV.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus, onely begotten Son of the eternal Father, figure of his ſubſtance, and ſplendor of his glory, remember that moſt earneſt recommandation wherewith thou didſt commend thy ſacred ſweet Soul to thy omnipotent Father upon the Croſſe, ſaying, *Father into thy hands I commend my ſpirit*, at which time thou didſt hang naked upon the Croſſe, with thy moſt holy Body all over wounded, rent and torn, powring forth ſtreams of moſt precious Blood with thy face pale and wanne, thy head crowned with thornes, thy arms extended, thy hands nailed, thy veines broken, thy bones diſjoynted, thy bowels of mercy opened, thy eyes weeping and obſcured, thy voice failing, thy breaſt

breaſt thirſting, and thy holy heart broken: O my moſt merciful Lord, unto all theſe cruel pains and torments didſt thou deliver thy moſt ſacred, innocent, tender, pure and precious Body, for the redemption of us moſt wretched, vile and miſerable ſinners; and in this manner render thy ſweet ſoul to thy celeſtial Father, by which moſt precious and innocent death of thine, and by the vertue of thy holy Croſſe, I beſeech thee, O Father of mercy, and omnipotent King of Saints, to give grace to reſiſt the World, the Fleſh and the Devil, that being dead to all terreſtrial things, I may live to thee alone, and have the happineſſe to be received by thee at my laſt paſſage, when this my miſerable exile ſhall be ended. *Amen.*

O moſt pious Lord Ieſus, be propitious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Matia.

O Most sweet Lord Jesus, most flourishing, true and fruitful Vine, remember the superabundant effusion of thy precious Blood, which thou didst poure forth so plentifully from all parts of thy holy Body, like a cluster of pressed grapes, when thou thy self all alone didst tread the Wine-presse on the Crosse, and out of thy pierced side didst give us water and wine to drink, not leaving so much as one drop, being then like a bundle of pure and precious Myrrhe; thou wert hanged on high upon the Crosse, at which time the liquor of thy bowels dryed up the marrow of thy bones consumed, and thy most delicate and tender Body wholly fainted and failed. O most sweet Lord Jesus, by this most liberal effusion of thy precious Blood, by thy bitter Death and Passion,

and

and all thy ſacred wounds, vouchſafe to wound my heart with that tender love, wherewith the holy heart of thy moſt Bleſſed Mother was wounded under the Croſſe, that the tears of love and pennance may be my bread, day and night, and convert me wholly to thee, that thy heart may be my perpetual habitation, my converſation pleaſing and acceptable to thy divine Majeſty, and the end of my life ſo laudable, that having finiſhed this mortal pilgrimage, I may be admitted into thy immortal glory to praiſe and glorifie thee, my ſoveraigne Lord, in the ſweet ſociety of thy holy Angels and Saints for all eternity. *Amen.*

O moſt gracious Lord Ieſus, be propitious to me a ſinner. Pater noſter. Ave Maria.

O Moſt ſweet Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Son of the living God,

God, vouchsafe to receive thes prayers, in union of that most excellent love, wherewith thou didst suffer all the wounds of thy most precious Body, and be merciful to me thy poor unworthy servant, and all sinners, with al faithful souls both living and dead, graciously granting to us al mercy, grace, remission of sins, and life everlasting. *Amen.*

THE END.

The Approbation.

THese pious Prayers, so much esteemed by devout persons, and divers times printed in Rome, Venice, *almost in all places of* Italie, Spaine, France, *and in the* Low Countries *in their several languages, worthily deserve to be exposed in our vulgar tongue, for the comfort of all those who desire to be partakers of such spiritual graces and favours; wherefore I judge them fit to be printed. Doway this* 5. *of July* 1653.

Br. Angelus of S. Francis Jubilate Lectour and Episcopal Censour of Books.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Of the Imitation of Christ, and contempt of all worldly vanities.

1 WHo *followes me, walkes not in darkneſſe*[a], ſayes our Lord. Theſe are the words of Chriſt, by which we are admoniſhed, that we muſt imitate his life and manners, if we will be truly illuminated, and delivered from all blindneſſe of heart. Let then our chiefeſt care be, to meditate on the life of Chriſt Jeſus.

2 The Doctrine of Chriſt excells

a Ioan. 8. 12.

cells all the doctrines of the Saints: and he who hath his Spirit, will finde therein hidden Manna. But it falles out, that many by often hearing of the Goſpel, feel but ſmall devotion; becauſe they have not the Spirit of Chriſt. But whoſoever deſireth fully and feelingly to underſtand the Words of Chriſt, muſt endeavour to conforme his whole life to his.

3 What availeth it thee, to diſpute profoundly of the Trinity; if for want of humility, thou doeſt diſpleaſe the Trinity[a]? High words ſurely, make not a man holy and juſt; but a vertuous life, makes him deare to God. I had rather feel compunction, than know the definition thereof. If thou dideſt know the whole Bible without book, and the ſayings of all the Philoſophers; what would all that profit thee, with-

[a] 1. Cor. 13.

without charity and grace? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but onely to love God, and to serve him. [a] That is the higheſt wiſdom, to tend to the Kingdom of Heaven by the contempt of the world.

4 [b] It is therefore vanity to ſeek after fading riches, and to truſt in them. It is alſo vanity, to gape after honours, and to climbe to a high ſtate. It is vanity to follow the deſires of the fleſh; and to deſire that, for which thou muſt be afterwards grievouſly puniſhed. It is vanity to hope for long life, or to wiſh for it, and to care little to live well. It is vanity, to minde onely this preſent life; and not to foreſee thoſe thinghs, which are to come. It is vanity, to love that which with all ſpeed paſſes away; and not to haſten thither, where is everlaſtig joy.

5 Remember often that Proverb:

a Eccl. 1. b Eccli. 4.

that [a] *the eye is not satiated with seeing, nor the eare filled with hearing.* Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and turn thy self to the invisible. For those who follow their sensuality, staine their conscience, and loose the grace of God.

a Eccl.1.

CHAP. II.

Of the humble esteeme of our selves.

1 EVery [b] man naturally desires to know; but what availes knowledge without the feare of God? Truly an humble husbandman, who serves God, is better then a proud Philosopher, who neglecting himselfe, contemplates the course of the Heavens. Who knowes himselfe wel, is contemptible to himselfe, and delightes not in the praises of men. If I should know

b Eccl.2.

know all things in the world, and were not in charity; what would that help me in the ſight of God, who will judge me according to my deeds [a]?

2 Quiet thy ſelf from te buſy deſire of knowing: for therein is found much diſtraction, and deceit. The learned would willingly ſeem ſuch to others, and be accounted wiſe. There are many things, which to know, does little or nothing profit the ſoul. And he is very unwiſe, who attendes to other things, than thoſe that ſerve to his ſalvation. Many words do not ſatiate the ſoule; but good life comforts the minde; and a pure conſcience gives great confidence in God.

3 The more and the beter thou underſtandeſt, ſo much more grievouſly ſhalt thou therefore be jud-

 ged,

[a] 1 Cor. 8.

ged, unleſſe thy life be alſo more holy. Wherefore deſire not to be extolled for any art or ſcience, but rather feare for the knowledge given thee. If it ſeem to thee, that thou knoweſt much, and underſtandeſt very wel: yet know, there be many things more which thou knoweſt not. [a] Seeke not to know things above thy reach, but rather confeſſe thy ignorance. Why wilt thou preferre thy ſelf before any one, ſeeing there be many more learned and skilfull in the law then thou? If thou wilt know and learne any thing profitable, love to be unknowne, and to be eſteemed as nothing.

4 This is the moſt high and profitable leſſon, truly to know and to deſpiſe our ſelves. It is great wiſdome and perfection for a man, to eſteem nothing of himſelf: and to think

a Romans.

think alwayes well and commendably of others. If thou ſhouldeſt ſee an other man openly ſinne, or commit any greivous offence, yet oughteſt not thou to eſteem better of thy ſelf; ſince thou knoweſt not, how long thou mayeſt be able to remaine in good ſtate. We are all fraile,[a] but thou muſt eſteeme none more fraile then thy ſelf.

a Gen. 8.

CHAP. III.

Of the Doctrine of Truth.

1 HAppy is he, whom Truth by it ſelf doth teach; [b] not by figures and paſſing words, but as it is in it ſelf. [c] Our opinion, and our ſenſe do often deceive us, and ſee but little. What availes earneſt cavilling about darke and hidden thinghs, for being ignorant of which, we ſhall not be reprehen-

b Pſal. 93. c Eccl. 3.

ded in judgement? It is great folly, to neglect profitable and necessary things, and so freely give our mindes to those, which are curious and hurtfull: [a] *Having eyes, we see not.*

2 What have we to do with *Genus* and *Species*, (tearms of Logicians?) He to whom the eternall Word speakes, is freed from multiplicity of opinions. From one word all, and all speake one; and this is the beginning, which speakes also to us. Without it no man understands, or judges rightly. He to whom all things are one, and who drawes all things to one, and sees all things in one; may be stable in heart, and remaine peaceable in God. O Truth God, make me one with thee in perpetual charity. It is tedious to me oftentimes, to reade & heare many things:

in

a Psal. 113.

in thee is all that I will and desire. Let all Doctours hold their peace: let all creatures be silent in thy sight: speake thou to me alone.

3 The more a man is [a] united in himself, and interiourly simplifyed; the more and higher things does he understand without labour: because he receives light of understandig from above [b]. A pure, simple, and stable spirit, is not distracted by many affaires: for that he does them all to the honour of God, and being quiet in himself, endeavours to be free from all self-seeking. Who hinders and troubles thee more then thy immortifyed affection of heart? A good and devout man does first dispose his workes interiourly, which he is to do exteriourly. Neither do they draw him to the desires of vitious inclinations, but he squares them to

a Math. 11. b Luk. 10.

to the judgement of right reaſon. Who hath a ſtronger combatt, then he who ſtrives to overcome himſelfe? And this ſhould be our buſineſſe: to wit to overcome our ſelves, and dayly become more powerfull over our ſelves, and grow ſtill better.

4 All perfection in this life, is mixed with ſome imperfection; and all our ſpeculation, is not without ſome obſcurity. An humble knowledge of thy ſelf, is a more aſſured way to God, then deepe ſearching after learning. Learning is not of it ſelf to be blamed, nor any knowledge of a thing which in it ſelf conſidered is good, and ordained by God: but a good conſcience, and a vertuous life is alwayes to be preferred before it. But becauſe many deſire more to know, then live well; they therefore often erre, and reape almoſt none or but ſmall proffit.

5 O if men would beſtow ſo much labour in rooting out of vices, and planting of vertues, as they doe in moving of queſtions; then ſo great evils would not be committed, nor ſo great ſcandals among the people, nor ſo much looſeneſſe in Monaſteries. [a] Truly at the day of Judgement, we ſhall not be examined what we have read, but what we have done; nor how wel we have learned, but how religiouſly we have lived. Tell me, where are now all thoſe Maiſters, with whom thou waſt wel acquainted, whilſt they lived and flouriſhed in learning? Now others poſſeſſe their livings; and I know not whither they ever thinke of them. In their life they ſeemed ſomthing, but now they are not ſpoken of.

6 O how ſoone does the glory of this world paſſe away! [b] Would to God their lives had beene anſwer-

a Math 5. b Eccl. 1. 6.

able

able to their learning! then had their ſtudy and reading beene to good purpoſe. How many periſh in this world by vaine learning, who little care for the ſervice of God[a]! And becauſe they rather chooſe to be great then humble, [b] they therefore vaniſh away in their own cogitations. He is truly great, who hath great charity. He is truly great, who is little in himſelfe, and maketh no account of all height of honour. [c] He is truly wiſe, who eſteemes all earthly things as dung, that he may gaine Chriſt. [d] And he is truly well learned, who does the will of God, and forſakes his owne.

a Tit. 2. b Rom. 1. c Matth. 18. 23. d Phil. 3.

CHAP. IV.

Of Prudence in our actions.

1 WE muſt not give credit to every word nor ſuggeſtion; but

but leasurely and warily weigh the thing according to God [a] But alas, such is our weakneſſe, that we often beleeve and ſpeake evil, ſooner then good of others. [b] But perfect men do not easily give credit to every thing that is told them; becauſe they know, [c] humane infirmity to be very prone to evil, and ſlippery enough in words.

2 It is great wiſdome, not to be raſh in our doings, nor to ſtand ſtifly in our own opinions. [d] As alſo, not to beleeve every mans words; nor preſently to relate againe to others, what thou haſt heard or beleeved. [e] Conſult with a wiſe and conſcientious man; and ſeeke to be inſtructed by a better, rather then follow thy owne inventions. [f] A good life makes a man wiſe according to God, and expert in many things. The more humble a man is

a 1. Iohn 4. b Iames 3. c Gen 8. Iames 3. d Prov. 19. and 17. Iob 17. e Eccl. 19. Prov. 12 and 15. f Eccl. 1.

is in himself, and more subject to God; so much more prudent shall he be in all things, and more at peace.

Chap. V.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

1 TRuth, not eloquence, is to be sought for in the holy Scriptures [a]. All sacred Scripture is to be read with the same Spirit it was made. We must rather search for profit in [b] Scriptures, then subtility of speach. We ought as willingly to reade devout & simple bookes, as high and learned. Let not the authority of the Writer offend thee, whether he be of great and small learning; but let the love of pure truth move thee to reade. Inquire not who spake; but marke what is spoken.

2 [c] Men passe away, but the truth of

a Rom.15. b 2.Cor.2. c Psal,116.Luk.22.

of our Lord remaines for ever. God ſpeakes divers wayes unto us without reſpect of perſons. Our own curioſity often hindereth us in reading of the [a] Scriptures, whilſt we will underſtand and diſcuſſe, that which ſhould ſimply be paſſed over. [b] If thou wilt reape proffit, reade humbly, ſimply, and faithfully: nor at any time deſire to be eſteemed learned. Enquire willingly after, & heare with ſilence the words of holy men: and let not the parables of the Elders diſpleaſe thee; for they are not ſpoken without cauſe.

a Rom.2.10. b Coloſſ 2.

CHAP. VI.

Of inordinate affections.

WHenſoever a man deſires any thing inordinately, he is preſently diſquieted in himſelfe. The proud and covetous,

are never at rest: the poor an humble in spirit, live together i all peace. The man, who is no perfectly dead to himself, is soo tempted, and overcome in smal and trifeling things. He who i weake in spirit, and in a manner ye carnall, and inclined to sensibl things, can hardly withdraw him selfe wholy from earthly desires And therefore he is often afflicted when he withdraweth himself fro them; and easily falls into indig nation, if any resist him.

2 And if he hath followed his a petite, he is presently grieve through remorse of conscience: b reason he hath given way to h passion, which conduced nothi to the peace, he sought for. Tr peace of heart is obtained by r sisting passions, not by yeilding them. There is no peace therefo in the heart of a carnal man, nor

am

a man addicted to external thinghs; but in a fervent ſpiritual man.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying vaine hope and pride.

1 HE[a] is vaine, who puttes his truſt in men, or in creatures. Be not aſhamed to ſerve others for the love of Jeſus Chriſt, nor to be eſteemed poor in this world. [b] Preſume not upon thy ſelfe, but put thy hope in God. Do what thou canſt, and God will aſſiſt thy good will. Truſt not in thy own knowledge, nor in the craft of any man living: but rather in the grace of God, who helpes the humble, and humbles thoſe who preſume of themſelves.

2 Glory not in wealth, if thou have it, nor in freinds, becauſe they are powerfull; but in God, who gives all things, and above all deſi-

a Ierem. 17. 1. b Pſal. 30. Ier. 9.

res to give himselfe. Extoll not thy selfe for thy stature and beauty of body, which is broken and disfigured by a small sickness. Please not thy selfe in thy ability or witt: least thou displease God, to whom appertaines all the good which naturally thou hast.

3 [a] Esteeme not thy self better then others, least perhaps in the sight of God, who knowes what is in man, thou be accounted worse. Be not proud of thy good works: for the judgement of God and men are different. That often offendes him which pleases men. If thou hast any good in thee, beleeve better of others, that so thou mayest conserve humility. It is no prejudice to thee, to esteeme thy selfe worse then any man: but it is very prejudiciall to thee, to preferre thy self before any one. The humble enjoy perpe-

a Exod. 3 12.

perpetual peace: but in the heart of the proud, is envy and frequent indignation.

CHAP. VIII.

That too much familiarity is to be shunned.

1 OPen not thy heart to every man: but treate thy business with him that is wise, and feares God. Rarely converse with young people and strangers. [a] Flatter not the rich, neither do thou willingly appeare before great persons. Keep company with the humble, simple, devout, and vertuous; and conferre with them of those things which may edify. Be not familiar with any woman: but in general commend all good women to God. Desire onely to be familiar with God alone, and his Angels; and fly the knowledge of men.

a Prov. 4.

2 We muſt have charity to all; but familiarity is not expedient. It falls out ſometimes, that the fame of ſome perſon unknowne makes him eſteemed: whoſe preſence notwithſtanding is not gratefull to the eyes of the beholders. We thinke ſometimes to pleaſe others by our company: and we beginne rather to diſguſt them, through the evil behaviour they behold in us.

CHAP. IX.

Of obedience and ſubjection.

1 IT is a very great matter, to remaine in obedience, to live under a Prelate, and not to be at our own diſpoſing It is much ſafer, to live in the ſtate of ſubjection, then of Prelacy. Many live under obedience, rather out of neceſſity, then charity: and ſuch are in paine, and eaſily murmur. Neither can they attaine

taine to freedome of minde, unleſſe they with all their hearts for Gods ſake ſubmit themſelves. Runne here and there: thou ſhalt not finde reſt, but in humble ſubjection under the government of a Prelate. The imagination and change of places have deceived many.

2 True it is, that every one willingly does according to his owne ſenſe, and is inclined moſt to ſuch as are of his owne minde. But if God be amongſt us, we muſt leave our owne judgement ſometimes, for the good of peace. Who is ſo wiſe, that he can fully know all things? Truſt not therefore too much to thy owne judgement; but be willing to heare the opinions of others. If that which thou thinkeſt be good, and notwithſtanding thou forſakeſt it for God, and ſhalt follow another; thou ſhalt more profit thereby.

3 For I have often heard, that it is more ſecure to hear and take adviſe, then give it. It may alſo happen, that each ones opinion may be good: but not to yeeld to another, when reaſon or cauſe requires it, is a ſign of wilfulneſſe and pride.

CHAP. X.

Of avoiding ſuperfluity of words.

1 FLy the tumult of men as much as thou canſt: [a] for all diſcourſe of ſecular affaires hinders very much, although related with a ſimple intention. [b] For we are ſoone defiled with vanity, and inthralled. I wiſh I had often held my peace, and not beene in company. But why do we ſo willingly ſpeake, and talke with one another; when notwithſtanding we ſeldome return to ſilence, without harme of conſcience? We therefore talke ſo willingly,

a Math. 4. 14. b Ioh. 6.

lingly, that by mutual discourse we may seeke to receive comfort from each other: and out of desire to ease our minde wearied with sundry thoughts. a And we very willingly talke & think of such things, as we most love or desire; or of those, which we feele cõtrary to us. 2 But alas oftentimes in vaine, and to no purpose: for this outward consolation is the cause of no small losse of the inward and divine comfort. We must therefore watch and pray, least the time passe away in idlenesse. If it be lawfull and expedient to speake, speake what may edify. a Evil custome, and neglect of our advancement, do much make way to inconsiderate speach. b Devout discourses notwithstanding do not a little further our spiritual progresse; chiefly where persons of one minde and spirit are gathered together in God.

a Math. 12. Luke 6. a Acts 1. b Rom. 15. CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of obtaining peace, and zeale of profiting.

1 WE might enjoy much peace, if we would not busy our selves with the words and deeds of others, and with what does not belong to us. How can he remain long in peace, who thrusts himselfe into the affaires of others? who seeks occasions without? who little or seldome recollects himself interiourly? [a] Blessed are the simple, for they shall enjoy much peace.

2 What was the reason why some of the Saints were so perfect and so contemplative? Because they strove to mortify themselves wholly from all earthly desires: and therefore they could with the force of their whole affection, adheare to God,

a Matt. 5.

God, & freely attend to their owne ſelves. We are too much buſyed with our owne paſſions, and too ſollicitous for tranſitory things. We ſeldome alſo perfectly overcome any one vice, nor are inflamed to dayly profiting: therefore we remaine cold and tepid.

3 If we were perfectly dead to our ſelves, and not intangled within; then we might taſt alſo divine things, and experience ſomewhat of heavenly contemplation. The whole and greateſt impediment is, becauſe we are not free from our paſſions and deſires; neither do we endeavour to walke in the perfect way of the Saints. Alſo when any ſmall adverſity happens, we are too ſoone dejected, and turne our ſelves to humane conſolations

4 If we would endeavour, like ſtout men, to ſtand in the battle; we ſhould ſurely finde the helpe of God

God from heaven. For he, who giveth us occasions of fighting, that we may overcome, is ready to succour those who fight manfully, and trust in his grace. If we esteem the progresse in Religion to consist onely in these exteriour observances, our devotion will soon be at an end. Lett us lay then the axe to the roote; that freed from passions, we may enjoy a quiet minde.

5 If every year we would roote out one vice, we should soone become perfect men. But now we perceive it oftentimes goes contrary with us; and that we were better, and more pure in the beginning of our conversion, then after many yeares of our profession. Our fervour and proffit should dayly increase; but now it is accounted a great matter, if a man can but retain some part of his first spirit. If we would use but a little violence in the beginning, then

then all things afterwards might be done with eaſe and joy.

6 It is grievous to leave off accuſtomed things; but more grievous to go againſt our owne will. But if thou doeſt not overcome ſmall and eaſy things, when wilt thou overcome harder things? Reſiſt thy inclination in the beginning, and breake off evil cuſtome: leaſt perhaps by little and little it draw thee to greater difficulty. O if thou dideſt conſider how great peace thou ſhouldeſt cauſe to thy ſelfe, and joy to others, by demeaning thy ſelfe wel, I ſuppoſe thou wouldeſt be more ſollicitous for thy ſpiritual proffit.

CHAP. XII.

Of the proffit of adverſity.

1 IT is good for us, that ſometimes we have adverſities and contradictions; ſince they often make

make a man enter into himſelfe, that he may know himſelfe to be in baniſhment, and not put his truſt in any thing of this world. It is good for us, that we be ſometimes contradicted, and that we be thought evil and imperfect, though we do and intende well. Theſe things do often further humility, and defend us from vaine glory. For then do we better ſeek God for our inward witneſſe, when outwardly we are deſpiſed by men, and little credit is given to us.

2 A man ſhould therefore ſo ſettle himſelfe wholy in God, that he may not have need to ſeek many humane comforts. When a man of good will is troubled, or tempted, or afflicted with evil thoughts; then does he underſtand the need he hath of God, without whom he perceives he can do no good. Then alſo does he grieve, lament, and pray for the

miſe-

miſeries, which he ſuffers. Then is he weary of living longer, and wiſhes that death would come; [a] that he might be diſſolved, and be with Chriſt. Then alſo he well perceives, that perfect ſecurity, and full peace, can not be had in this world.

a Phil. 1.

CHAP. XIII.

Of reſiſting temptations.

1 AS long as we live in this world, we can not be without tribulation and temptation. And therefore it is written in Job: [a] *The life of man is a temptation upon earth.* Every one therefore ought to be carefull about his temptations, and watchfull in prayer, [b] leaſt the devil, who never ſleepes, but goes about, ſeeking whom he may devoure, finde meanes to deceive him;

a Iob 7. b 1. Pet 5.

him. No man is ſo perfect and holy, but hath ſometimes temptations, and we can not be wholy free from them.

2 Temptations notwithſtanding are often proffitable unto man though they be troubleſome and grievous; for by them man is humbled, purged, and inſtructed. [a] All the Saints have paſſed through, and profited by many tribulations and temptations. And who could not well beare temptations, became reprobate, and fell from God. There is no Order ſo holy, nor place ſo ſecret, where there be no temptations or adverſities.

3 There is no man, whilſt he lives, wholy ſecure from temptations: for we have in us the foundation thereof, ſince we are borne in concupiſcence. One temptation or tribulation going away, another co-

a Acts 14.

mes; and we have alwayes ſomewhat to ſuffer; having loſt our ſoverain felicity. Many by ſeeking to fly temptations, do fall more grievouſly into them. By onely flight we cannot overcome, but through patience and true humility we become ſtronger then all our enemyes.

4 He who ſhunnes them onely outwardly, and pulls them not up by the roots, will proffit little: yea temptations will ſooner approach him, and he ſhall feele himſelfe worſe then before. By little and little with patience and longanimity thou ſhalt (by Gods help) better overcome, then by violence and thy owne importunity. Often take counſel in temptations; and deale not roughly with him that is tempted; but give him comfort, as thou wouldeſt wiſh to be done to thy ſelfe.

5 The beginning of all evil temptations, is inconstancy of minde, and little confidence in God. For as a shippe without a sterne, is tossed to and fro by the waves, so the man that is negligent, and quittes his resolution, is many wayes tempted. a Fire tryes iron, and temptation a just man. We know not many times what we can do: for temptation shewes what we are. We must be watchfull, and especially in the beginning of the temptation: for then is the enemy more easily vanquished, if he be not suffered to enter the doore of the heart: but be resisted without the threshold, at his first knocke. Whereupon one said: *Resist the beginnings; after remedy comes too late* For first occurres to the minde a simple thought; then a strong imagination; afterwards delectation, and

ar

a Eccl. 27.

an evil motion, and consent. And so by little and little the wicked enemie gets full entrance, whilest he is not resisted at first. And so much the longer as a man is negligent in resisting; the weaker does he become dayly, and the enemie more powerfull againſt him.

6 Some ſuffer greater temptations in the beginning of their converſion, and ſome in the end. Some againe are much troubled all their life time. Some are but lightly tempted, according to the wiſdome and equity of the divine Ordination, which weighs the ſtates and merrits of men, and preordaines all for the ſalvation of his elect.

7 We muſt not therefore deſpayre, when we are tempted: but pray more fervently to God, that he will vouchſafe to helpe us in all tribulation: who no doubt, according to the ſaying of Saint Paul, [a] *will make*

[a] 1. Cor. 10.

with temptation such issue, that we may be able to sustain it. Let us humble our souls therefore under the hand of God in all tribulation and temptation: [a] for he will save and exalt the humble in spirit.

8 In temptations and tribulations a man is proved, how much he hath proffited: and his merrit is greater thereby, and his vertue made more apparent. Neither is it much, if a man be devout and fervent, when he feeles no difficulty: but if in time of adversity he carry himself patiently, there is hope of great proffit. Many are preserved from great temptations, who in lesser are dayly overcome: that being humbled they may never presume of themselves in great matters, who are so weake in small occasions.

a 1. Peet. 5.

CHAP. XIV.

Of avoiding rash judgement.

1 TUrne thy eyes upon thy selfe, and take heede of judging the actions of others. [a] In judging others man laboures in vaine, often erres, and easily sinnes: [b] but in judging and discussing himselfe, he labours alwayes proffitably. As we affect a thing, so do we often judge of it: for private affection easily bereaves us of true judgement. If God were alwayes the pure intention of our desire, we should not so easily be troubled for the resistance of our owne opinion.

2 But some inward secret inclination, or outward affection, does often concurre, which also draweth us after it. Many seeke themselves secretly in the things which they doe, and knowe it not. They

a Matth. 7. Rom. 2. b Eccl. 8.

ſeeme alſo to live in good peace of minde, when things are done according to their will and judgement: but if they be done otherwiſe then they deſire, they are ſoone moved and growe ſad. [a] The diverſities of judgements and opinions, are many times the cauſe of diſſentions amongſt friends and citizens, amongſt religious and devout perſons.

3 An old cuſtome is hardly broken: and no man is lead willingly further then himſelfe likes If thou rely more upon thy own reaſon and induſtry, [b] then upon the ſubjective vertue to Jeſus Chriſt, thou ſhalt rarely and hardly be an illuminated man; for God will have us to be perfectly ſubject to him, and to tranſcend all reaſon through inflamed love.

a Matth. 22. Luk. 12. b Ier. 13.

CHAP. XV.

Of works done out of charity.

1 FOr no worldly thing, nor for the love of any man whatsoever, is the least evil to be committed: [a] yet for the good of some one standing in neede, a good worke sometimes is to be left of, or changed into a better. For by so doing, the good work is not lost, but changed into a better. Without charity the exteriour worke profits nothing: [b] but whatsoever is done out of charity, be it never so little and contemptible, is made wholy profitable: for God weighes more the affection, then the action.

2 He does much, that loves much. He does much, that does a thing well. He does well, who rather serves the community, then his own will. [c] That seemes often-

a Matth. 18. b 1. Cor. 13. c Luk. 7.

times to be charity, which is rather carnality: [a] for carnal inclination, self-will, hope of reward, desire of commodity, will seldome be wanting.

3 Whosoever hath true and perfect charity, seekes himselfe in nothing, but in all things desires the onely glory of God. [b] He envies none, because he loves no private joy; neither will he rejoyce in himselfe, but above all good, wishes to enjoy God. [c] He attributes nothing that is good to any man, but referres it wholy to God, from whom, as frō a fountaine, all things proceede; in whom, as in their end, all the Saints joyfully rest. O he that had but one sparke of true charity, would certainly perceive all earthly things to be full of vanity.

a Phil. 2. b Phil. 2. 1. Cor. 13. c Psal. 17. 21.

CHAP. XVI.

Of bearing with the defects of others.

1 WHat a man cannot mend in himself, nor in others, he must patiently suffer, untill God ordain otherwise. [a]Thinke that perhaps it is better so for thy triall and patience, without which our merits are not much to be weighed. Thou must pray notwithstanding when thou hast such impediments, that God would vouchsafe to assist thee, and make thee able to beare them well.

2 If any one being once or twice admonished, does not yeild unto thee, do not contend with him; but commit all to God, that his will may be done [b] and he honoured in all his servants, who knowes how to turne evil into good. [c]Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the

a Math. 6. and Lukitn. b Math. 6. c 1. Thes. 3. & Gal. 6.

defects of others, and any infirmities whatsoever; since thou thy selfe hast many things, which others must bear withall. If thou canst not make thy self as thou would'st; how canst thou expect to have another according to thy liking? We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults.

3 We will have others to be strictly corrected, and will not be corrected our selves. The large liberty of others displeases us; and yet we will not be denyed what we desire. We will have others restrained by lawes; but in no sort will we suffer our selves to be so. By this it appeares, how rarely we love our neighbour as our selves. If all were perfect, what should we have to suffer from others for God?

4 But now God hath so ordained, that we must learne to beare one

anothers [a] burthens: for there is no man without defect, [b] no man without burthen, no man sufficient of himself, no man wise enough for himself: we ought therefore to beare with one another, comfort, helpe, instruct, and admonish one another. Every ones vertue is best discovered by occasion of adversity: for occasions make not a man fraile, but shew what he is.

a Gal. 6. b 1. Thes. 5. and 1. Cor. 12.

Chap. XVII.

Of Monasticall life.

1 THou must learn to break [a] thy will in many things, if thou wilt live in peace and concord with others. It is no small matter to dwell in Monasteries, or in Congregation, and there to converse without complaint, and to persevere faithfull till death. [b] Blessed is he, who

a Gal. 6. b Luk. 8.

who hath there lived well, and ended happily. If thou wilt be ſtable and proffit as thou ougliteſt to do; eſteeme thy ſelf as a baniſhed man, and a pilgrime upon earth. Thou muſt be made a fool for Chriſts ſake, if thou wilt leade a religious life.

2 The habit and tonſure, do contribute little: [a] but the change of manners, and intire mortification of paſſions, make a true religious man. [b] Who ſeekes any thing elſe but purely God, and the good of his ſoule, ſhall finde nothing but tribulation and ſorrow. Neither can he remaine long in peace, who does not endeavour to be the leaſt, and ſubject to all.

3 Thou dideſt come to ſerve, not to rule: know thou art called to ſuffer and labour, and not to be idle and prate. [c] Here men are tried, as gold in the furnace. Here no man can

a 1. Pet. 2. b Eccl. 1. and Eccli. 2. c Matth. 29. Wiſd. 3.

can be ſtable, unleſſe he humble himſelfe with all his heart for the love of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the examples of the holy Fathers.

1 BEhold the lively examples of the holy [a] Fathers, in whome true perfection and Religion ſhined, and thou ſhalt ſee how little, and almoſt nothing that is, which we doe. Alas, what is our life compared to theirs? The Saints and friends of Chriſt, ſerved our Lord in hunger, and thirſt, in coldneſſe and nakedneſſe, in labour and wearineſſe, in watchings and faſtings, in prayers and holy meditations, in perſecutions and many reproaches.

2 O how many and grievous tribulations ſuffered the Apoſtles and Martyrs, Confeſſours, Virgins, and all the reſt, who deſired to followe the

[a] Heb. 11.

the steps of Christ? [a] For they hated their lives in this world, that they might possesse them in everlasting life. O how strict and abandouned lives did the holy Fathers lead in the wilderneſſe? O how long and grievous temptations did they ſuffer? How frequently were they vexed by the enemie? How continual and fervent prayers did they offer to God? What rigorous abſtinence did they undergoe? How great zeal and fervour had they of their ſpiritual proffit? What ſtrong war did they wage for the conquering of vices? How pure and upright was their intention to God? All the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to continual prayer: though in labouring they ceaſed not from mentall prayer.

3 They ſpent all their time proffitably; every houre ſeemed ſhort to them

a Luc. 12. Matth. 19.

them to attend to God: & through the great ſweetneſſe of contemplation, they forgot the neceſſity of corporal refection: [a] they renounced all riches, dignities, honours, freinds, and kindred: they deſired nothing belonging to the world: they ſcarce tooke what was neceſſary for the ſuſtaining of life: they grieved to ſerve their bodies even in neceſſity. They were poore therefore in earthly things, but very rich in grace and vertues. Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly they were repleniſhed with grace and divine comfort.

4 They were ſtrangers to the world; but near and familiar freinds to God. [b] They ſeemed to themſelves as nothing, and were by this world deſpiſed; but precious and beloved in the ſight of God. They were grounded in true humility, li-

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a Math. 19. b Iam. 4.

ved in simple obedience, walked in charity and patience: and therefore they profited dayly in spirit, and obtained great favour with God. They are given for an example to all Religious: and they should more stirre us up to spiritual fervour, then the number of cold and negligent Religious to relaxation.

5 O how great was the fervour of all religious in the beginning of their institution? O how great devotion to prayer? How great emulation of vertue? How exact discipline flourished? How great reverence and obedience, under the rule of a maister, was in all things observed? Their foot-steps yet remaining, do testify, that they were truly perfect and holy men: who fighting so valliantly, troade the world under their feete. Now is he much accounted of, who is not a transgressour of his rule; who can with

patience

patience indure what he hath profeſſed.

6 O coldneſſe and negligence of our ſtate, that we ſo ſoone decline from our firſt fervour: and now through ſloath, and tepidity, we are weary of our lives! Would to God the deſire of advancement in verrue were not wholy aſleepe in thee, who haſt often beheld ſo many examples of devout perſons!

CHAP. XIX.

Of the exercices of a good religious man.

1 THe life of a good religious man ought to excell in all vertues: that he may interiourly be ſuch, [a] as exteriourly he ſeemes to men. And according to reaſon he ought to be much more interiourly, then what exteriourly appeares: [b] for the beholder of our heart is

a Matth. 5. b Pſal. 132.

God, [a] whom we ought most highly to reverence, whereſoever we are, and walke as Angells pure in his ſight. [b] We muſt renew every day our reſolution, and excite our ſelves to fervour; as if this were the firſt day of our converſion, and ſay: Aſſiſt me, ô Lord my God, in my good purpoſe, and thy holy ſervice: and graunt that now this day I may perfectly beginne; for it is nothing that I have hitherto done.

2 According to our reſolution, ſhall be the ſucceſſe of our profit: and much diligence is neceſſary for him that will profit much. For he often failes, that makes a ſtrong reſolution: what will he doe, who ſeldome or leſſe ſtedfaſtly reſolves upon any thing? The not performing of our purpoſe happens many wayes: and the light omiſſion of our exercices, rarely paſſes with-

ſom-

[a] Heb. 4. [b] Pſal. 15.

ſome loſſe. The purpoſe of juſt men, dependes rather upon the grace of God, then upon their owne wiſdome: in whom they alſo alwayes confide, whatſoever they undertake. [a] For man purpoſes, and God diſpoſes; neither is the way of man in his owne hands.

3 If for pieties ſake, or intention of fraternall profit, our accuſtomed exercice be ſometimes omitted, it may be afterwards eaſily recovered. But if through tediouſneſſe of minde, or negligence, it be lightly left of, it is worthy of blame, and will prove hurtfull. [b] Endeavour what we can, yet ſhall we lightly faile in many things. Notwithſtanding ſomething certaine is alwayes to be purpoſed, eſpecially againſt that which moſt hinders us. Our exteriour and interiour are alſo to be examined and ordered, be-

a Prov. 16. b Eccl. 7.

cauſe both are expedient to our advancement.

4 If thou canſt not alwayes recollect thy ſelfe, yet doe it ſometimes: at leaſt once a day, to witt, in the morning, or the evening. [a] In the morning reſolve; in the evening examine the performance how thou haſt this day behaved thy ſelfe in thought, word, and deede: for in theſe perhaps thou haſt often offended God and thy neighbour. Beſtirre thy ſelfe like a man againſt all diabolicall ſleights: bridle gluttony, and thou ſhalt more eaſily curbe all other inclinations of the fleſh. Be never altogether idle: but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or doing ſome proffitable thing for the common good. Corporall exerciſes notwithſtanding are diſcreetly to be uſed, and not equally to be undertaken by all.

[a] Deut. 4.

5 Thoſe

5 Thoſe things which are not common, are not to be expoſed to publike view: for private things are more ſafely done in ſecret. Yet art thou to take heede, that thou be not ſlack to common exerciſes, and more forward to private: but having faithfully and fully accompliſhed what thou art bound to doe and is injoyned thee; if thou haſt further leaſure, returne to thy ſelfe, as thy devotion ſhall move thee. All cannot have the ſelfe ſame exerciſe: but one is more proper for this perſon, another for that. Moreover according to the time and occaſion, divers exerciſes are more pleaſing: for ſome reliſh better upon working dayes, others upon holy dayes. Some are neceſſary in time of temptation, others in time of peace and tranquillity. Some, we willingly thinke on, when we are ſad: and others, when we are joy-

full in our Lord.

6 Upon principall holy dayes, our good exercises are to be renewed; and the suffrages of the Saints to be more fervently imployed. From feast to feast we must resolve with our selves, as if we were then to depart out of this world, and to come to the eternall feasts in the next. And therefore we ought carefully to prepare our selves at holy times, and to live more devoutly, and keepe all observance more exactly, as if we were shortly to receive the reward of our labour from God.

7 And if it be differred, let us beleeve our selves not well prepared, and unworthy as yet of that great glory, which [a] shall be revealed in us at the time appointed: and in the meane time let us labour to prepare our selves better for our depar-

[a] Rom. 8.

departure. [a] *Blessed is the servant* (sayes Luke the Evangelist) *whom when his Lord shall come, he shall finde watching.* [b] *Amen I say unto you, he shall place him over all his possessions.*

a Luke 12. b Math. 14.

Chap. XX.

Of the love of solitude and silence.

1 Seeke out a fitt time to attende to thy selfe, and often call to minde the benefitts of God. Leave curiosities. [a] Reade such things, as may cause rather compunction, then occupation. If thou withdrawe thy selfe from superfluous talke, and idle wandring abroad, and from hearing of newes and tales, thou shalt finde time sufficient and fitt, to exercise thy selfe in good meditations. [b] The greatest Saints avoyded the company of men, as much as they

a Eccl. 1. b Heb. 11.

could, and chose to live to God in secret.

2 I returned lesse man (said one) as often as I was amongst men. This we often experience, when we talke long. It is easier to keepe silence altogether, then not to exceede in words. It is easier for one to stay at home, then to demeane himselfe abroad as he ought. He therefore, who intendes to attaine to internall and spirituall things, ought with Jesus to withdrawe himselfe from the multitude. No man goes safely abroad, but he who willingly stayes at home. No man securely speakes, but he who willingly holds his peace. No man securely gouvernes, but he who delights to live in subjection. No man securely commands, but he who hath learned well to obey.

3 No man securely rejoyces, unlesse

a Matth. 4.

leſſe he have within him the teſtimony of a good conſcience. Yet the ſecurity of the Saints, was alwayes full of the feare of God. Neither were they leſſe carefull and humble in themſelves, though they ſhined with grace and great vertues. But the ſecurity of evill men, riſes from pride and preſumption, which in the end deceives them. Never promiſe to thy ſelfe ſecurity in this life; though thou ſeeme to thy ſelfe to be a good monke, or a devout heremite.

4 Thoſe oftentimes, who were better in the judgement of men, were in greater danger, through their too much confidence. It is proffitable therefore to many, not to be altogether free from temptations, but to be often aſſaulted; leaſt they ſhould be too ſecure: and ſo perhaps be puffed up with pride, or give themſelves too free-

ly to outward comforts. O how good a conſcience ſhould he keepe, who would never ſeeke after tranſitory joy, nor buſy himſelfe with the things of this world! O how great peace and quietneſſe ſhould he poſſeſſe, who would cut of all vaine ſollicitude; and onely thinke of divine things, and ſuch as conduce to the good of his ſoule; and place all his hope in God!

5 No man is worthy of heavenly conſolation, who does not diligently exerciſe himſelfe in holy compunction. If thou deſireſt true contrition of heart, enter into thy cloſet, and exclude the tumults of the world, as it is written: [a] *Be contrite in your cloſets* Thou ſhalt finde in thy cell, what thou ſhalt often looſe abroad. Thy cell if thou continue in it growes ſweete; and if thou love not to ſtay in it, becomes

a Pſal. 4.

mes teadious. If in the beginning of thy converſion thou doeſt cultivate and keepe it well, it will be afterwards to thee a deare freind, and moſt delightfull comfort.

6 In ſilence, and quiet the devout ſoule reapes profit, and learnes the ſecrets of holy Scriptures. There ſhe findes floods of teares, wherein ſhe may every night waſh, and cleanſe her ſelfe; that ſhe may become ſo much more familiar with her maker, by how much further ſhe lives from all worldly tumults. For to him that withdraweth himſelfe from his acquaintance, and freinds, God with his holy Angells will draw neare. Better is it for a man to lye hidd, and take care of himſelfe; then neglecting himſelfe, to doe miracles. It is laudable for a religious man to goe ſeldome abroad, and to avoyde ſeeing, or being ſeene by men.

7 Why

7 Why wilt thou see that, which thou oughtest not to have? The world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof. Our sensuall desires drawe us to roave abroad: but when the houre is past, what doest thou carry home, but a burthened conscience, and a distracted minde? A joyfull going abroad causes often a sorrowfull returne home: and a merry evening, makes a sad morning. So all carnall joy hath a pleasant entrance, but in the end causes remorse, and destruction. What canst thou see elsewhere, which thou seest not here? Behold here heaven, and earth, and all the elements: for of these all things are made.

8 What canst thou see any where under the Sunne, that can continue long? [a] Thou thinkest perhaps to be satiated; but thou canst not

[a] Eccl. 1.

not attaine to it.[a] If thou ſhouldeſt ſee all things preſent, what were it but a vaine viſion? [b] Lift up thine eyes to God on high, and aske pardon for thy ſinnes, and negligences. Leave vaine things to the vaine; and doe thou attend to thoſe things, which God hath commanded thee. Shut the doore upon thee, and call unto thee *Ieſus*, thy beloved. Remaine with him in thy cell; for thou ſhalt not finde ſo great peace any where elſe. Hadſt thou not gone abroad, nor hearkened to idle rumours, thou hadſt continued better in quiet peace. But by thy delighting ſometimes to heare novelties, thou muſt needes ſuffer trouble of minde.

a Eccl. 3 b Pſal. 122.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Compunction of heart.

1 [a] IF thou wilt proffit any thing, keepe thy ſelfe in the feare of God, and be not too free; but awe all thy ſenſes, with the curbe of diſcipline, and give not thy ſelfe to fooliſh mirth. Give thy ſelfe to compunction of heart, and thou ſhalt finde devotion. Compunction gaines much good, which diſſolu-teneſſe is wont ſoone to deſtroy. It is wonderfull, that a man, who weighs and conſiders his baniſh-ment, and ſo many dangers of his ſoule, can heartily rejoyce at any time in this life.

2 Through levity of heart, and neglect of our defects, we feele not the ſorrowes of our ſoule; but ma-ny times vainely laugh, when we have juſt cauſe to weepe. There is no

a Prov. 29.

no true liberty, nor good mirth, but in the feare of God with a good conſcience. Happy is he, who can caſt away all occaſion of diſtraction, and recollect himſelfe to the union of holy compunction. Happy is he, who can ſhake of from himſelfe all that may defile, or burthen his conſcience. Fight manfully; one cuſtome overcomes another. If thou canſt forbeare to intermeddle with other men, they will not hinder thee in that which thou haſt to doe.

3 [a] Buſy not thy ſelfe with other mens matters, nor intangle thy ſelfe with the affaires of thy betters. Have ſtill in the firſt place an eye to thy ſelfe, and eſpecially admoniſh thy ſelfe before any whom thou loveſt beſt. If thou haſt not the favour of men, be not therefore greived: but take this to heart, that

a Gal. 1.

that thou doest not carry thy selfe so well, and circumspectly, as becomes a servant of God, and a devout religious man to converse. [a]It is oftentimes better, and more secure for a man, not to have many consolations in this life, especially such as are according to the flesh. But that we have not divine comforts, we are in fault our selves; because we labour not for compunction of heart, nor doe cast of vaine and exteriour comforts.

4 Acknowledge thy selfe unworthy of divine consolation, and rather deserving great tribulation. [b]When a man is perfectly compunct, then all the world is bitter and troublesome to him. [c]A good man findes alwayes sufficient cause of mourning and weeping: for whither he consider himselfe, or weigh the state of his neighbour

a Psal. 76. b Iud. 2, and 20. c 2. Kings 13.

he perceives that none lives here without tribulation. And the more throughly he considers himselfe, the more he greives. Our sinnes and vices, wherein we are so plunged, that we can seldome contemplate heavenly things, doe administer unto us matter of just sorrow, and interiour compunction.

5 [a] If thou dideſt more frequently thinke of thy death, then of long life, no doubt but thou wouldeſt be more carefull to amend thy selfe. [b] Dideſt thou also cordially consider the future paines of hell, and purgatory, I beleeve thou wouldeſt willingly indure any labour and paine, and not feare any kinde of austerity. But because these things pierce not the heart, and we still love what delights; therefore we remaine cold, and very loathfull.

a Eccii. 7. b Math. 15.

6 It is oftentimes want of ſpiri
that makes the miſerable body ſ
quickly complaine. Pray therefo
humbly to our Lord, that he ma
give thee the ſpirit of compun
ction: and ſay with the Prophet
[a] *Feede me, ô Lord, with the bread*
teares, and give me to drinke wi
teares in meaſure.

a Pſal. 79.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the conſideration of humane miſery.

1 MIſerable art thou whereſo
ever thou art, and whither
ſoever thou turneſt thy ſelfe, u
leſſe thou turne thy ſelfe to Go
Why art thou troubled, becauſe
ſucceedes not with thee as tho
wouldeſt and deſireſt? Who is h
that hath all things according t
his will? Neither I, nor thou, no
an

any man upon earth. [a] No man living in this world is without ſome tribulation, or affliction; be he King or Pope. Who is he who is beſt at eaſe? he ſurely who for God can ſuffer affliction.

2 Many weake and fraile men ſay: [b] Behold how well ſuch an one lives, how rich, how great, how powerfull, how mighty is he! But lift up thine eyes to heavenly riches, and thou ſhalt perceive, all theſe temporall things to be nothing; but very uncertaine, and very burthenſome: ſince they are never poſſeſt without care and feare. [c] The felicity of man conſiſts not in having aboundance of temporall things, but a meane ſuffices him. Truly it is a miſery to live on earth. [d] The more a man deſires to be ſpirituall, the more bitter is this preſent life unto him; becauſe he

a Eccl. 6. b Luk. 12. c Prov. 1. Iob. 14. Eccl. 2.

perceives better, and sees more clearly the defects of humane corruption. For to eate, drinke, watch, sleepe, rest, labour, and to be subject to all other necessities of nature, is truly a great misery, and an affliction to a devout man, who would willingly be freed, and delivered from all sinne.

3 For the inward man is very much oppressed with corporall necessities in this world. Whereupon the Prophet devoutly prayes, that he might be freed from these necessities, saying: [a] *Deliver me, O Lord, from my necessities.* But woe be to them, who knowe not their misery: and more woe to them, who love this miserable and corruptible life. For some there be who embrace it so closely (though with labouring and begging, they scarce gett' necessaries) [b] that if they could

a Psal. 24. b Rom. 8.

could live here alwayes, would not care at all for the Kingdome of God.

4 O senseleſſe people, and infidells in heart, who lye buried ſo deepe in the earth, that they underſtand nothing but carnal things! But miſerable that they are; in the end they ſhall feele to their coſt, how vile and nothing that was, which they loved [a] Whereas the Saints of God, and all the devout freinds of Chriſt, looked not on thoſe things, [b] which pleaſed the fleſh, and flouriſhed for a time: but with all their hope, and intention panted after eternal bleſſings. Their whole deſire aſpired upwards to things everlaſting and inviſible, that the love of viſible things might not drawe them downwards to things here belowe. [c] O brother looſe not thy confidence of going

a 1. Pet. 1. b Heb. 11. c Rom. 13. Heb. 12.

forwards in spirituality; there is yet time, the houre is not yet past.
5 Why wilt thou differre thy resolution from day to day? Arise, beginne this very instant, and say: Now is the time to doe, now is the time to fight, now is a fit time to amend. When thou art ill at ease, and much troubled, then is the time to merit. [a] Thou must passe through fire and water before thou canst come to refreshment. Unlesse thou use violence to thy selfe, thou shalt not overcome vice. As long as we carry about with us this fraile body, [b] we cannot be without sinne, nor live without teadiousnesse, and greife. We would faine be quiet and freed from all misery; [c] but because through sinne we have lost innocence, we thereby have lost true happinesse: therefore it behoves us

[a] Psal. 56. [b] Rom. 7. [c] Gen. 3. 2. Cor. 5.

us to have patience, and to expect the mercy of God, till this iniquity passe away, and mortality be swallowed up by life.

6 O how great is humane frailty, which is alwayes inclined to evil! [a] To day thou confessest thy sinnes, and to morrowe thou doest againe commit them. [b] Thou now resolvest to take heede, and within an houre after thou doest as if thou hadst made no resolution at all. We may therefore with reason humble our selves, and never have any great conceipt of our selves; since we are so fraile and unstable. That may also be soone lost by negligence, which with much labour was hardly gained at last by grace.

7 What will become of us in the end, who so timely beginne to growe cold? Woe be to us, if we

a Gen. 6. and 8. b 2. Macab. 9.

thus decline to reſt, as if it were peace and ſecurity; whereas there does not as yet appeare the beginning of true ſanctity in our converſation. We have great neede, like good Novices, to be newly inſtructed againe to good manners: if perhaps there might be hope of ſome future amendment, and greater ſpirituall progreſſe.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the meditation of death.

1 DEath will ſoone come upon thee, [a] looke therefore what condition thou art in To day a man, to morrowe none. And out of ſight, out of minde. O ſtupidity and hardneſſe of mans heart, who thinkes onely of the preſent, and does not provide for the future. [b] Thou ſhouldeſt ſo order thy ſelfe in all thy thoughts, and actions, as if

[a] Iob 9 and 44. Alſo Luk. 12. and Heb 9. [b] Matth. 23.

if thou wert this day or presently to depart this life. [a] If thou hadest a good conscience, thou wouldest not much feare death. [b] It is better to avoyde sinne, then to fly death. If thou beest not prepared to day, how wilt thou be to morrowe? [c] To morrowe is uncertaine: and whither thou shalt live to see it, or no, thou knowest not.

2 What availes it to live long, since we amend so little? Ah, long life does not alwayes amend us, but often increases our fault. Would to God we had spent one day well in this world. Many reckon the yeares of their conversion, but the fruit of amendment is often but small. If it be dreadfull to dye, it will perhaps be more dangerous to live longer. [d] Blessed is he, who hath alwayes the houre of death before his eyes, and dispo-

[a] Luk. 12. [b] Wisd. 4. [c] Matth. 24. and 25. [d] Eccl. 7.

ſes himſelfe dayly to dye. If at any time thou haſt ſeene a man dye, conſider that thou ſhalt paſſe the ſame way.

3 When it is morning, conceive thou ſhalt not live till night. And when night comes, do not dare to promiſe thy ſelfe the next morning. Be thou therefore alwayes prepared, and live ſo, that death may never come upon thee unawares. Many dye ſuddenly, and when they little thinke of it: [a] for in the houre, we leaſt imagine, the Sonne of man ſhall come. When that laſt houre ſhall come, thou wilt beginne to have another conceipt of thy whole life paſt: and be exceeding ſorry, that thou haſt beene ſo remiſſe and negligent.

4 [b] How wiſe, and happy is he, who indeavours to be now ſuch in his life, as he wiſhes to be found

[a] Math. 24. Luk. 21. [b] Eccl. 4.

found at his death! For the perfect contempt of the world, fervent desire to proffit in vertue, love of discipline, labour of pennance, promptnesse of obedience, forsaking our selves, and bearing patiently all adversity for the love of Jesus Christ, will give great confidence of a happy death. Many good things thou mayest doe, whilest thou art well: but when thou art sicke, I kowe not what thou canst doe. Few are amended by sickness: and in like manner those who travaile much abroad, are rarely sanctified.

5 [a] Trust not in thy freinds and neighbours, neither doe thou differre to future times thy soules health: for men will sooner forgett thee, then thou doest imagine. [b] It is better now in time to provide, and doe some good beforehand,

a Eccl. 30. and 31. Also Ier. 17. v. 48. b Matth. 6.

hand, then to rely on the help of others. If thou beeſt not ſollicitous for thy ſelfe now; who will be ſollicitous for thee when thou art gone? Time now is very pretious. But alas, that thou doeſt not ſpend it more proffitably, by which thou mighteſt merit hereafter to live for ever. The time will come, when thou ſhalt deſire one day or houre to amend in: and I knowe not, whether it will be granted thee.

6 O moſt dearly beloved, from how great danger mayeſt thou deliver thy ſelfe: and from how great feare free thy ſelfe, if thou wouldeſt now be alwayes fearfull, and expecting death. Endeavour now ſo to live, that in the houre of death thou mayeſt rather rejoyce then feare. [a] Learne now to dye to the world, that thou mayeſt then beginne

[a] Rom. 6.

ginne to live with Christ. [a] Learne now to despise all things, that thou mayest then freely goe to Christ. [b] Chastise thy body now by pennance, that thou mayest then have assured confidence.

7 [c] Ah foole! why doest thou thinke to live long, since here thou hast not one day secure? How many are deceived, and unexpectedly snatched out of this body? How often hast thou heard related, that such a one was slaine with a sword; an other drowned; an other falling from on high, broke his necke; this man with eating was choaked; that man in playing gott his end: an other by fire, an other by a weapon, an other by plague, an other murthered by theeves. Thus is death the end of all, and the life of man passes as a shaddow.

8 [d] Who will remember thee, when

a Luke 14. b 1. Cor 9. c Luke 12. d Iob 14.

when thou art dead? or who will pray for thee? Doe, doe now most dearly beloved, whatsoever thou canst doe; for thou knowest not when thou shalt dye, and art ignorant also what shall befall thee after death. [a]Whilest thou hast time, heape up into thy selfe everlasting treasures. Thinke of nothing but thy salvation: attend onely to what belongs to God. Make now thy selfe freinds, by honouring the Saints of God, and imitating their lives: [b]*that when thou faileſt in this life, they may receive thee into the eternall habitations.*

9 [c]Keepe thy selfe as a pilgrime and stranger upon earth: to whom the affaires of the world doe nothing belong. [d]Keepe thy heart free, and elevated to God; for thou hast not here a permanent city. Send thither thy prayers, and dayly

a Math. 6. Luk. 12. and Gal. 6. b Luk. 16. Heb. 1. c 1. Pet. 2. d Heb 13.

ly ſighs with teares, that thy ſoule may deſerve happily after death to paſſe to our Lord. Amen.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of judgement, and puniſhments of ſinnes.

1 [a] IN all things conſider thy end, and how thou ſhalt ſtand before a ſevere Judge, to whom nothing is hidden, who is not appeaſed with gifts, nor admits excuſes: but will judge according to juſtice. [b] O moſt miſerable and fooliſh ſinner, what wilt thou anſwere to God, who knowes all thy wickednesſes; who ſometimes feares the very looke of an angry man? Why doeſt thou not provide for thy ſelfe againſt the day of judgement, when none ſhall be excuſed, or defended by another; but every one ſhall be a ſufficient burthen to him-

a Heb. 10. b Iob 9. Luke 16.

himselfe?[a] Now thy labour is profitable, thy teares acceptable, thy groanes to be heard, thy sorrow satisfactory and purgative.

2 A patient man hath a great and wholesome Purgatory, who receiving injuries, [b] greives more for others malice, then for his owne wrong: [c] who prayes willingly for his adversaries, and from his heart forgives offences: who delayes not to aske forgivenesse: who is sooner moved to compassion, then anger: who often uses violence to himselfe, and labours with his whole force to subdue the flesh in all things to the spirit. It is better now to purge sinne, and cutt downe vice, then to reserve them for future punishment. We truly deceive our selves through the inordinate love, which we beare to our flesh.

3 Wha

a 2. Cor, 6. b Iam. 1. c Luk. 23. and Acts 7.

3 What other thing ſhall that fire devoure, but thy ſinnes? The more thou now ſpareſt thy ſelfe, and followeſt the fleſh, the more greivouſly ſhalt thou pay for it hereafter, and a greater fewell ſhall be added to the flame. In what ſinnes a man hath ſinned, in thoſe ſhall he be more greivouſly puniſhed. There ſhall the ſloathfull be pricked forwards with burning goades; and the gluttonous tormented with extreame hunger and thirſt. There the luxurious, and lovers of pleaſures, ſhall be covered with burning pitch, and ſtinking brimſtone. And the envious, like mad doggs, ſhall howle for greife.

4 There ſhall be no vice which ſhall not have a peculiar and proper puniſhment. There the proud ſhall be repleniſhed with confuſion: and the covetous puniſhed with miſerable penury. There one

[a] houre shall be more greivous in paine, then here a hundred yeares of most sharpe pennance. There is no rest, no comfort for the damned: but here there is sometimes intermission of labour, and we enjoy the comfort of our freinds. [b] Be now sollicitous, and sorrowfull for thy sinnes, that in the day of judgement thou mayest be secure with the blessed. For then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that afflicted and oppressed them. Then shall he stand to judge, who now humbly submits himselfe to the judgement of men. Then shall the poore and humble have great confidence, and the proud feare on every side.

5 Then will it appeare that he was wise in this world, who hath learned for Christs sake to be a foole, and despised. Then shall all tribu-

a Iob 4. v. 41. b Wisd 5.

tribulation patiently suffered delight, [a] and all iniquity stopp her mouth. [b] Then shall the devout rejoyce, and the prophane mourne. Then shall mortified flesh more exult, then if it had beene alwayes nourished in delight. Then shall the poore garment shine, and the pretious robe become sullied. Then shall the poore cottage be more commended, then the rich pallace. [c] Then shall constant patience more availe us, then all the power of the wortd. Then will simple obedience be preferred before all secular craft.

6 Then shall a good and pure conscience cause more joy, then learned philosophy. Then shall the contempt of riches weigh more, then all worldly treasures. Then wilt thou be more comforted that thou hast prayed devoutly, then

[a] Psal. 106. [b] 2. Cor. 4. [c] Esay. 29.

that thou hast fared daintily. Then wilt thou rejoyce more that thou hast observed silence, then talked much. Then will thy holy worke be of greater value, then many faire words. Then will a strict life, and hard pennance, be more pleasing, then all earthly delights. Learne now to suffer a little, that thou mayest then be delivered from more grievous paines. Proove first here what thou art able to doe hereafter. If thou canst now indure so little, how wilt thou be able to suffer eternall torments? If now so little suffering make thee so impatient, what will hell fire doe hereafter? Loe truly thou canst not have two paradises; to delight here in this world, and afterwards to raigne with Christ.

7 If thou hadst lived alwayes to this day in honours,[a] and pleasures,

What

a, Luke 16.

what would it all availe thee, if it happen that thou ſhouldeſt now inſtantly dye? [a] All is vanity therefore, but to love God, and ſerve him onely. [b] For whoſoever loves God with his whole heart, is not afraid of death, or puniſhment, or judgement, or hell: ſince perfect love gives ſecure acceſſe to God. But no marvell if he, whom ſinnes yet delight, doe feare both death, and judgement. Yet it is good, that if love cannot reclaime thee from ſinne, at leaſt the feare of hell may reſtraine thee. But he, who layes aſide the feare of God, cannot continue long in good ſtate, but will quickly fall into the ſnares of the devill.

a Eccli. 1. b Rom. 8.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the fervent amendment of our Whole life.

1 [a] BE thou watchfull and diligent in the service of God, and often consider with thy selfe, to what end thou camest, and why thou dideſt leave the world. Was it not that thou mighteſt live to God, and become a ſpirituall man? [b] Be fervent therefore to profit; for [c] thou ſhalt ſhortly receive the reward of thy labours; and then there ſhall be no more feare, or greife in thy coaſts. [d] Thou ſhalt labour now here a while, and thou ſhalt reape great reſt, yea perpetuall joy. [e] If thou doeſt continue faithfull, and fervent in working, God without doubt will be faithfull, and bountifull in rewarding. Thou muſt haye good hope of getting

a 2. Tim. 4. b Math. 5. c Apoc. 21. and 2. d Eccl. 38. Apoc. 21. and 22. e Math. 19.

getting the victory: but must not be in security of it, least thou waxe negligent, or growe proud.

2 When a certaine man being anxious, and often wavering betweene feare and hope, on a time oppressed with greife, had prostrated himselfe in prayer in the Church before an Altar, he revolved this in his minde, saying: O if I knewe, that I should yet persevere. And he presently heard the divine answere: What, if thou didest knowe it; what wouldest thou doe? Doe now, what thou wouldest then doe; and thou shalt be happily secure. And presently comforted, and strengthened, he committed himselfe to the divine will; and the anxious wavering ceased.

a And he had no minde curiously to search further, what might befall him; but rather studied to discerne

a Rom 12.

cerne the acceptable and perfect will of God, for the beginning, and perfecting every good worke.

3 [a] *Hope in our Lord, and doe good* (saith the Prophet) *and inhabite the land, and thou shalt be fedd with the riches thereof.* One thing there is, which deterreth many from progresse in vertue, and fervent amendment, the horrour of difficulty, or labour of the combatt. But they truly above others proffit most in vertue, who more stoutly indeavour to overcome those things, which are more greivous, and contrary to them. For there a man proffits more, and merits greater grace, where he most overcomes himselfe, and mortifies himselfe in spirit.

4 But all men have not alike to overcome and mortifie. Yet a diligent emulatour will be able to

profit

a Psal. 36.

profit more, though he have more passions to overcome, then another lesse passionate, but lesse fervent to vertue. Two things especially conduce to great amendment, to witt, to withdrawe our selves violently from that to which nature is viciously inclined: and to labour fervently for that good, we have most neede of. Endeavour also to avoyde and overcome those things most, which doe most often displease thee in others.

5 Make thy proffit on all occasions: so as if thou doest heare, or see any good examples, thou stirre up thy selfe to imitation. [a] But if thou doest perceive any thing reprehensible, take heed thou committ not the same; or if thou at any time hast done it, labour forthwith to amend it. [b] As thine eye

a Matth. 7. b Ephes. 5. v. 1.

obſerves others, ſo art thou alſo noted againe by others. [a] O how ſweete and pleaſant a thing it is, to ſee fervent and devout brethren, well mannered, and diſciplined! [b] How grievous, and pittifull, to ſee diſorderly livers: who practiſe not the things, to which they are called! How hurtfull it is, to neglect the purpoſe of our vocation; and buſy our ſelves in things not belonging to us!

6 Be mindefull of the reſolution thou haſt made, and putt before thine eyes the image of the Crucifix. Thou mayeſt well be aſhamed, beholding the life of Jeſus Chriſt: ſeeing thou haſt not yet endeavoured more earneſtly to conforme thy ſelfe unto him, though thou haſt beene a long time in the way of God. A religious man, who exercises himſelfe ſeriouſly, and devoutly

[a] 2 Cor. 12 [b] Eccl 3.

voutly in the moſt holy life and Paſſion of our Lord, ſhall there aboundantly finde whatſoever is neceſſary and proffitable for him: neither neede he ſeeke for any thing beter out of Jeſus. [a] O if Jeſus crucified did but come into our hearts, how ſoone ſufficiently learned ſhould we be!

7 A fervent religious man, takes and beares all things well, which are commanded him. A cold and negligent religious, hath tribulation upon tribulation, and is on all ſides afflicted; becauſe he wants interiour comfort, and is forbidden to ſeeke any without. A religious not living in diſcipline, is in great danger of ruine. Whoſoever ſeekes for liberty and eaſe, ſhall ever live in diſquiet; for one thing, or another, will alwayes diſpleaſe him.

8 How doe ſo many other religious,

[a] Gal. 2, 6.

gious, who live under the strict rule of clauſtrall diſcipline? They ſeldome goe abroad, live retiredly, feede very meanly, are courſly cloathed, labour much, ſpeake little, watch long, riſe early, ſpend much time in prayer, read often, and keepe themſelves in all kinde of diſcipline. Conſider the Carthuſians, and Ciſtercians, and the Monkes, and Nunnes of divers Orders, how they riſe every night to ſing praiſes to God. And therefore it would be very unſeemely, that thou ſhouldeſt be ſloathfull in ſo holy a worke, where ſo great a multitude of religious beginne to praiſe God in all gladneſſe of heart.

9 O that we had nothing elſe to do, but with our whole heart and mouth to praiſe our Lord God! O that thou dideſt never neede to eate, or drinke, or ſleepe; but could devote alwayes praiſe God, and emplo-

thy ſelfe onely in ſpirituall exerciſes! Thou ſhouldeſt then be much more happy then now, whileſt through ſuch like neceſſities thou ſerveſt the body. Would to God theſe neceſſities were not at all, but onely the ſpirituall refections of the ſoule, which (alas) we taſt of too ſeldome.

10 When a man comes to this point, that he ſeekes his comfort from no creature, then does he beginne firſt to reliſh God perfectly; then will he alſo be well content with all events.[a] Then will he neither rejoyce in great matters, nor be ſorrowfull for ſmall: but wholy and confidently committ himſelfe to God, who is unto him All in All: to whom likewiſe nothing periſhes, nor dyes; but all things doe live unto him, and ſerve him at a becke without delay.

11 "Be

[a] Rom. 11, and 1. Cor. 8. 12, and 15.

11 [a] Be alwayes mindefull of th
end, and how loſt time never retu
nes. Without care and diligenc
thou ſhalt never gaine vertues.
thou beginne to waxe cold, it wil
goe ill with thee: but if thou giv
thy ſelfe to fervour, thou ſhalt fin
de great peace, and feele leſſe l
bour through the grace of Go
and love of vertue A fervent an
diligēt man is ready for all thing
It is a harder taske to reſiſt vic
and paſſions, then to toile in co
porall labours. He that ſhunn
not ſmall faults, by little and l
tle falls into greater. Thou w
alwayes [b] rejoyce in the evenin
if thou ſpend the day proffitabl
Be watchfull over thy ſelfe, ſtir
up thy ſelfe, admoniſh thy ſelf
& [c] whatſoever becomes of othe
neglect not thy ſelfe. The grea
violēce thou uſeſt againſt thy ſe
the more thou ſhalt proffit. *Am*

a Eccl. 7. Apoc 3. b Eccl. 29. c Math. 11.

THE II. BOOK OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Of internall conversation.

THE *Kingdome of God is within you*, [a] saith our Lord. Turne thy selfe with thy whole heart unto the Lord: and forsake this miserable world, and thy soule shall finde rest. Learne to despise exteriour things, and give thy selfe to the interiour, and thou shalt perceive the Kingdome of God to come into thee. [b] For the Kingdome of God is peace, and joy

a Luke 17. Ioel 2, b Rom. 14.

joy in the holy Ghoſt, which
not given to the wicked. Chri
will come unto thee, ſhewing t
thee his comfort, if thou prepa
for him a worthy manſion with
thee. [a] All his glory and beauty
within, and there he pleaſes him
ſelfe. He often viſits the interna
man, and hath with him pleaſin
diſcourſes, delightfull conſola
tions, much peace, and much
be admired familiarity.

2 Goe too faithfull ſoule, prepa
re thy heart for this Spouſe: th
he may vouchſafe to come unt
thee, and dwell in thee. For ſo h
ſaith: [b] *If any one love me, he wi
keepe my word, and we will come
him, and make our aboade With him*
Give place to Chriſt therefore, an
deny entrance to all others. Whe
thou haſt Chriſt, thou art rich, an
he will ſuffiſe thee. He will

a Pſal. 44. b Iohn 14.

thy provider, and faithfull assistant in all things, so that thou needest not trust to men: for men are quickly changed, and decay suddenly: but Christ remaines for ever, and stands firmely to the end.

3 [a] There is no great trust to be put in a fraile and mortall man, though he be advantagious, and deare unto thee: neither must thou be sad, if he sometimes crosse and contradict thee. Those who to day are with thee, to morrow may be against thee: so on the contrary side, they often change like the winde. [b] Put all thy trust in God, and let him be thy love, and feare. He will answere for thee, and doe all that is best. Thou hast not here a permanent citty; and whereseever thou art, thou art a stranger, and pilgrime: [c] nor shalt thou ever ha-

a Ier. 17. b 1. Pet. 5. c Heb. 13. Phil. 3.

ve reſt, unleſſe thou be intimely
nited to Chriſt.

4 • Why doeſt thou gaze abo
here, ſince this is not the place
thy reſt? In Heaven muſt be th
dwelling, and all earthly things a
to be regarded as in a paſſage. b A
things paſſe away, and thou tog
ther with them. Beware thou cle
ve not to them, leaſt thou be i
thralled, & periſh. Let thy thoug
be upon the moſt high, and t
prayer directed to Chriſt witho
intermiſſion. If thou canſt not co
template high and heavenly thin
reſt in the Paſſion of Chriſt; a
dwell willingly in his holy woun
For if thou fly devoutly to t
wounds and pretious markes
Jeſus, thou ſhalt feele great co
fort in tribulation: neither w
thou much care for the contem
of men, and wilt eaſily beare t
wo

• Phil. 3. b Wiſd. 1.

wordes of ſlanderous toungs.

5 Chriſt alſo was deſpiſed in the world by men, and in great neceſſity, [a] and forſaken by his acquaintance, and freinds, in the midſt of ſlaunders. [b] Chriſt would ſuffer, and be deſpiſed; and dareſt thou complaine of any one? Chriſt had adverſaries, and backbiters; and wouldeſt thou have all men freinds, and benefactours? How ſhall thy patience be crowned, if no adverſity happen? How wilt thou be the freind of Chriſt, if thou wilt ſuffer no contrary thing? Suffer with Chriſt, and for Chriſt, if thou wilt raigne with Chriſt.

6 If thou hadſt once perfectly entred into the interiour of Jeſus, and felt a little of his burning love, then wouldeſt thou not care at all for thy owne commodity, or diſcommodity; but wouldeſt rather

a Matt. 5, 11. 26. and John 15. b 2 Tim. 2.

rejoyce at affronts offered thee: for the love of Jesus makes a man despise himselfe. A lover of Jesus, and of truth, and a true internall man, and free from inordinate affections, can freely turne himselfe to God, and lift himselfe above himselfe in spirit, and enjoying himself in peace.

7 He that savoures all things as they are, not as they are said, and esteemed to be; is truly wise, and rather taught by God, then men.

a He who knowes how to guide himselfe from within, and makes small reckoning of outward things, seekes not for places, nor expects times for performing of devout exercises. An internall man soon recollects himselfe: because he never wholy powres himselfe but upon outward things. He is not hindered by exteriour labour, or necessary

a Essay 64.

ceſſary buſineſſe for a time; but as things fall out, ſo he frames himſelfe to them. He that is well ordered, and diſpoſed within, doth not heede the ſtrange and perverſe carriages of men. So much more is a man hindred and diſtracted, as he drawes things to himſelfe.

8. [a] If all were right with thee, and though wert throughly purged, every thing would fall out to thy good, and profit. Many things doe therefore often diſpleaſe, and trouble thee, becauſe thou art not yet perfectly dead to thy ſelfe, nor free from affection to all earthly things. Nothing ſo defiles and intangles the heart of man, as impure love to creatures. If thou refuſe exteriour comfort, thou wilt be able to contemplate heavenly things, and often interiourly rejoyce.

a Rom. 8.

Chap. II.

Of humble ſubmiſſion under the gouvernment of a Prelate.

1. REgard not much who is with thee, or who is againſt thee: but let this be thy buſineſſe and care, [b] to procure that God may be with thee in all that thou doeſt, and that thou mayeſt keepe a good conſcience; [c] and then God will ſufficiently defend thee: for whom God will helpe, no mans malice can hurt. If thou canſt hold thy peace, and ſuffer, without doubt thou ſhalt ſee that our Lord will helpe thee. He knowes the time, and manner how to deliver thee; thou muſt therefore reſigne thy ſelfe unto him: It belongs to God to helpe, and free from all confuſion. It doth ſometimes much conduce towards the con-

a Rom. 8. b 2. Cor 4. c Pſal. 27.

conservation of humility, that others knowe and reprehend our faults.

2 When a man humbles himselfe for his faults, he easily pacifies others, and soone asswages their anger against him. God protects and delivers the humble: he loves, and comforts the humble: he inclines to the humble man: to the humble he imparts great grace; and after his depression, he raises him to glory. To the humble he reveales his secrets, and drawes, and invites him sweetly to himselfe. The humble man receiving contumelie, and confusion, is in great peace; because he relyes on God, not on the world. Doe not conceive thou hast profited any thing, unlesse thou esteeme thy selfe inferiour to all.

Chap. III.

Of a good peaceable man.

1. PUt thy ſelfe firſt in peace, and then mayeſt thou pacifie others. A peaceable man does more good, then one that is very learned. A paſſionate man turnes good into evill, and eaſily beleeves the worſt. A good peaceable man turnes all things to good. He that is truly in peace, is not ſuſpicious of any: but he that is diſcontented and troubled, is toſſed with divers ſuſpicions; neither is he quiet in himſelfe, nor ſuffers others to be quiet. He ſayes often that which he ſhould not; and omits that, which is more expedient for him to doe: he conſiders what others are bound to doe; and neglects what he is bound to doe himſelfe. [b] Have therefore in the firſt place a care

a 1. Cor. 13. b Matth. 17. Acts 1.

a carefull zeale over thy ſelfe, and then thou mayeſt juſtly be zealous of thy neighbour.

2 Thou knoweſt well how to excuſe and colour thy owne deeds; and wilt not receive the excuſe of others. [a] It were more juſt, that thou dideſt accuſe thy ſelfe, and excuſe thy brother. [b] If thou wilt be borne withall, beare alſo with another. Loe how farre thou art yet from true charity and humility, which knowes not how to diſdaine or be angry with any, but onely with himſelfe. It is no great matter to converſe with good and milde people: for this naturally pleaſes all, and every one willingly would have peace, and love thoſe beſt who agree with them. But to be able to live peaceably with the harſh and perverſe, or diſorderly, or ſuch as contradict us, is a great

a Gal. 6. b 1. Cor. 13.

grace, and very commendable and a manly deede.

3 Some there be who keepe themſelves in peace, and have peace alſo with others. And there are ſome, who are neither at peace in themſelves, nor ſuffer others to be in peace: they are troubleſome to others, but alwayes more troubleſome to themſelves. And ſome there be who keepe themſelves in peace, and labour to bring others to peace. But all our peace in this miſerable life conſiſts more in humble ſuffering, then in not feeling adverſities. He who knowes beſt how to ſuffer, will injoy moſt peace: ſuch a one is a conquerour of himſelfe, and lord of the world, a freind of Chriſt, and heire of Heaven.

CHAP. IV.

Of a pure minde and simple intention.

1 WIth two wings man is lifted up above earthly things; to wit, with simplicity and purity. Simplicity must be in the intention, and purity in the affection. Simplicity intendes God, purity apprehends and tasts him. No good action will hinder thee, if thou be free from inordinate affection. If thou intend, and seeke no other thing but the good pleasure of God, and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt injoy internall liberty. If thy heart were right, then every creature would be unto thee a looking glasse of life, and a booke of holy doctrine. There is no [a] creature so small and abject, that represents not the goodnesse of God.

2 If

2 If thou wert good and pure within, then wouldeſt thou be able to diſcerne, and take all things well without impediment. A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell. According as every one is interiourly, ſo judges he exteriourly. If there be joy in the world, a man of a pure heart ſurely poſſeſſes it. And if there be any where tribulation and affliction, an evill conſcience muſt needes feele it. As iron put into the fire, looſes the ruſt thereof, and becomes firy glowing; ſo a man wholy converting himſelfe to God, becomes fervent, and is changed into a new man.

3 When a man beginnes to growe cold, then is he afraid of ſmall labours, and willingly receives outward conſolations. But when he beginnes perfectly to overcome himſelfe, and to walke manfully in the

way of God, then does he esteeem those things but light, which before were heavy to him.

CHAP. V.

Of the consideration of our selves.

1 WE cannot much trust to our selves, because we often want grace and understanding. [a] There is but little light in us, and this we quickly loose through negligence. Oftentimes also we perceive not our inward blindnesse. We doe often evill; and which is worse, we excuse it: and we are moved sometimes with passion, and conceave it zeale. [b] We reprehend small things in others, and what is great in our selves, we passe over. [c] We quickly feele, and weigh what we suffer from others: but what others suffer from us, we minde not. Whosoever would

a Ier. 17. b Psal. 140. c Matth. 7.

would well and duely consider his owne deedes, would finde no reason to judge hardly of another.

2 [a] An internall man preferres the care of himselfe, before all other cares. And he that lookes diligently to himselfe, easily holds his peace of others. Thou wilt never be internall and devout, unlesse thou passe over with silence other mens matters, and have a speciall eye to thy selfe. [b] If thy minde be wholy upon God, and thy selfe, thou wilt little be moved with what thou seest abroad. Where art thou, when thou art not present to thy selfe? When thou hast runne over all, what hast thou profited, neglecting thy selfe? If thou wilt (as thou oughtest) injoy true peace, and union, thou must lay all the world aside, and looke onely to thy selfe.

3 Thou

a Matth. 16. b 1 Cor. 4. and Gal. 6.

3 Thou wilt therefore profit much, if thou keepe thy ſelfe free from all temporall care. Thou wilt faile exceedingly, if thou eſteeme any temporall thing. Let nothing be high, nothing great, nothing gratefull, nothing acceptable to thee, but purely God, or what is from God. Eſteeme all comfort vaine, which thou receiveſt from any creature. [a] A ſoule that loves God, deſpiſes all that is under him. God alone eternall, and immenſe, filling all places, is the comfort of the ſoule, and the true joy of the heart.

a Eccl. 1.

CHAP. VI.

Of the joy of a good conſcience.

1 [a] THe glory of a good man, is the teſtimony of a good conſcience. [b] Keepe a good conſcience, and thou ſhalt alwayes have

a 2. Cor. 1. b Wiſd. 17.

have joy. A good conſcience ca
beare very much, and is very joy
full in adverſities. An evill con
ſcience is alwayes fearfull, and un
quiet. Thou ſhalt reſt ſweetely,
thy heart doe not reprehend thee
Rejoyce not, but when thou ha
done well. Sinners have never tru
joy, nor feele inward peace; [a] *be*
cauſe there is no peace to the impious
ſaith the Lord. [b] *And if they ſhould*
ſay: We are in peace, and no evi
will fall upon us; who ſhall dare
hurt us? [c] *Beleeve them not, for upo*
a ſudden the wrath of God ſhall ri
and their deedes ſhall be turned in
nothing, and their conceipts ſhall pe
riſh

2 To glory in tribulation, is no
thing hard to him that loves: [d] *fo*
ſo to glory, is to glory in t
Croſſe of our Lord. [e] That glo
is ſhort, which is given and rec

[a] Eſay 48. [b] Luk. 21. [c] Eſay 37. [d] Rom 8. [e] Ga

ved from men. [a] Greife ever waites upon the glory of the world. [b] The glory of good men is in their consciences, not in the tongues of men. The gladneſſe of the juſt is from God; and in God: and their joy is of the truth. He that deſires true and everlaſting glory, cares not for temporall. And he that ſeekes temporall glory, or does not from his heart contemne it, is convinced to have but little love to heavenly glory. He hath great quiet of minde, who neither cares for praiſes, nor diſpraiſes.

3 He whoſe conſcience is pure, will eaſily be content and pacified. Thou art not more holy for being praiſed; nor worſe, if diſpraiſed. What thou art, thou art; neither oughteſt thou to be accounted greater, then what thou art in the ſight of God. [c] If thou conſider

a Iob 5 b 2 Cor. 1 c 1 Kings 16.

well what thou art within, th
wilt not care what men say
thee abroad. Man beholds the f
ce, but God sees the heart. Ma
considers the actions, but Go
weighs the intention. To doe al
waves well, and to esteeme litt
of thy selfe; is a signe of an hum
ble minde To refuse comfort fro
any creature, is a token of gre
purity, and interiour confidence.
4 It is evident, that he who see
kes no outward witnesse for him
selfe, hath committed himsel
wholy to God: [a] *For not he wh
commends himselfe* (saith Saint Paul
*is approved; but he whom God co
mends.* To walke interiourly wi
God, and not to be possessed wi
any outward affection, is the st
of an internall man.

a 2 Cor: 10.

CHA

Chap. VII.

Of the Love of Jesus above all things.

1 Blessed is he who understands what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himselfe for Jesus. [a] One beloved thing must be left for another, because Jesus alone will be beloved above all things. The love of a creature is deceitfull, and unconstant: the Love of Jesus faithfull, and perseverant. Whosoever cleaves to a creature, shall fall with that which is subject to fall. Whosoever embraces Jesus, shall stand firmely for ever [b] Love him, and keepe him for thy freind; who when all goes away, will not leave thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. Thou must at last be separated from all creatures, whither thou wilt, or no.

2 Cleave fast to Jesus, living and

a Psal. 118. b Deut. 6 Math. 22.

dying: and committ thy ſelfe to his truſt, who when all faile, can onely aſſiſt thee. Thy beloved is of that nature, that he will have no partener: will have thy heart alone, and ſitt in it, like a King in his owne throne. If thou didſt know well how to free thy ſelfe from all creatures, Jeſus would willingly dwell with thee. What truſt ſoever thou putteſt in any beſides Jeſus, is all no better then loſt. Truſt not, nor rely on a reede ſhaken with every puffe of winde: a for all fleſh is hay, and the glory thereof ſhall wither away as the flowre of the field.

3 Thou ſhalt ſoone be deceived if thou regardeſt onely mens outward appearance. For if then thou ſeekeſt thy comfort and profit thou ſhalt often looſe by it. If in all thou ſeekeſt Jeſus, thou ſhalt ſure

a Eſay 40.

ſurely finde Jeſus. But if thou ſeeke thy ſelfe, thou ſhalt alſo finde thy ſelfe, but to thine owne ruine. For man hurts himſelfe more, by not ſeeking Jeſus, then the whole world, and all his enemies beſides.

Chap. VIII.

Of familiar freindſhip with Ieſus.

WHen Jeſus is preſent, all is well, and nothing ſeemes difficult: but when Jeſus is abſent, all is hard. When Jeſus ſpeakes not within us, our comfort is poore: but if Jeſus ſpeake but one word onely, we abound with conſolation. [a] Did not Mary Magdalene preſently riſe from the place, where ſhe wept, when Martha ſaid to her: *Thy Maiſter is here, and calls thee?* A happy houre, when [b] Jeſus calls from teares to joy of ſpirit. How dry and hard art thou

a Iohn 11. b Matth. 26.

thou without Jesus? How foolish and vaine, if thou desirest anything out of Jesus. Is it not a greater dammage, then to loose the whole world?

2 What can the world profit thee without Jesus? [a] To be without Jesus, is a grievous hell; and to be with Jesus, is a sweete paradice. If Jesus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee. [b] Whosoever findes Jesus, findes a good treasure; yea good above all good. [c] And whosoever looses Jesus, looses too much, and more then the whole world. He is extreame poore, who lives without Jesus; and he exceeding rich, who is well with Jesus.

3 It is great skill, to knowe how to converse with Jesus; and great wisdome, to knowe how to conserve him. Be humble and peaceable

a Rom. 8. b Mark 13. Luke 2.

able, and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and quiet, and Jesus will remaine with thee. Thou mayest soone drive Jesus away, and loose his grace, if thou decline to exteriour things. And if thou drive him from thee, and loose him, to whom wilt thou then fly, and whom wilt thou seeke for thy freind? Without a freind thou canst not well live: and if Jesus be not above all thy freind, thou wilt be too sorrowfull and desolate. Thou doest then foolishly, if thou trust and rejoyce in any other. [a] We must rather choose to have all the world against us, then Jesus offended with us. Of all therefore that are deare to thee, lett Jesus alone be thy speciall beloved.

4 Love all for Jesus; but Jesus for himselfe. Jesus Christ onely is

[a] Gal. 6.

especially to be beloved: who alone above all freinds, is found to be good, and faithfull For him, and in him, let all, as well freinds as foes, be deare to thee: [a] and these are all to be prayed for, that they all may knowe and love him. Never desire to be singularly praised, or beloved: for that appertaines to God alone, who hath none like unto himselfe. Neither doe thou desire, that the heart of any should be sett on thee: nor doe thou sett thy heart on the love of any: but lett Jesus be in thee and every good man.

5 Keepe thy heart pure, and free from captivity to any creature. Thou must be naked [b] and pure in heart in the sight of God, if thou wilt attende, and see, how sweete our Lord is. And truly thou shalt never attaine to this, except thou be

a Matth. 5. b Psal. 93.

be prevented, and drawne by his grace. that all being emptyed and dismissed, thou alone mayest be united to him alone. For when the grace of God comes unto man, then is he powerfull for all things: and when it retires, then will he be poore, and weake, left as it were onely to stripes. When this happens, thou must not be dejected, nor despaire; but resigne thy selfe to the will of God with indifferency, and suffer all that shall befall thee for the glory of Jesus Christ: for after winter followes summer; and the night passed, the day returnes; and after a tempest faire weather appeares.

CHAP. IX.

Of the want of all comfort.

1 IT is not hard to despise humane comfort, when we have di-

vine. But it is much, and very much, to be able to want all consolation, both divine, and humane: and to be willing for Gods honour to endure desolation of heart: [a] and to seeke himselfe in nothing, nor to regard his owne desert. What great matter is it, if thou be cheerefull and devout at the coming of grace? This houre is wished for by all men. He rides at his ease, whom the grace of God carryes. What wonder, if he feele no burthen, who is borne up by the Almighty, and lead by the soveraigne guide.

2. We willingly receive some kinde of comfort, and a man can hardly shake of himselfe. The holy Martyr Saint Laurence overcame the world with his preist; because he despised whatsoever seemed delightfull in the world: and for the love of Christ, he also meekely

[a] Phil. 2.

meekely ſuffered the high preiſt of God Sixtus whom he very much loved, to be taken from him. He overcame therefore the love of the creature, through the love of his Creatour: and choſe rather the divine pleaſure, then humane comfort. Doe thou alſo learne ſo to forſake ſome neceſſary thing, and a beloved freind for the love of God. Doe not take it greivouſly, when thou art forſakē by a freind, knowing that at length we ſhall all be ſeparated from one another.

3 A man muſt fight long, and much in himſelfe, before he can learne fully to overcome himſelfe, and draw all his affections wholy unto God. When a man truſts in himſelfe, he eaſily ſlides into humane comforts. But a true lover of Chriſt, and a diligent purſuer of vertue, gives not himſelfe to ſuch ſolaces, nor ſeekes ſuch ſenſible

ſweetneſſes; but rather ſtrong exer-
ciſes, and to ſuſtaine hard labour
for Chriſt.

4 When ſpirituall comfort the-
refore is given from God, receive it
with thankfulneſſe; and knowe it
is the guift of God, not thy merit.
Be not puffed up, joy not too
much, nor preſume vainely: but
be thou more humble for the gra-
ce received, and more wary, and
fearfull in all thy actions; for that
houre will paſſe away, and tempta-
tion will ſucceede. When conſo-
lation is taken from thee, diſpaire
not preſently: but with humility,
and patience, expect the heavenly
viſitation; for God is able to re-
turne thee greater grace and com-
fort. This is not new, nor ſtrange
to them who have experience in
the way of God: for in great Saints,
and ancient Prophets, there were
now and then ſuch kinde of alter-
nations.

5 Whe-

5. Whereupon one (then repleniſhed with grace) ſaid: [a] *In my aboundance, I will not be moved for ever.* But when grace was retired, he added what he found in himſelfe, ſaying: *Thou turnedſt thy face from me, and I became troubled.* Notwithſtanding he dôes not diſpaire in the midſt of theſe changes, but more earneſtly prayes to God, ſaying: *Vnto thee, ô Lord, will I cry, and I will pray unto my God.* Laſtly he receives the fruite of his prayer, and witneſſes that he was heard, ſaying: [b] *The Lord hath heard me, and taken pity upon me: the Lord is become my helper.* But wherein? *Thou haſt turned* (ſayes he) *my ſorrow into joy, and thou haſt environned me with gladneſſe.* And if great Saints have beene thus dealt withall, we, who are poore and weake, ought not to diſpaire, though we be

a Pſal 29. b In the ſame place.

be ſometimes fervent, and ſometimes cold; [a] for the ſpirit comes, and goes according to his good pleaſure. Whereupon bleſſed Job ſayes: [b] *Thou doeſt viſit him early in the morning, and ſuddenly doeſt prove him.*

6 Wherein then ſhall I hope, or in what ſhall I put my truſt, but in the great mercy of God alone, and in the onely hope of heavenly grace? for whither I injoy the preſence of good men, or devout brethren, and faithfull freinds, or holy bookes, or learned treatiſes, or ſweete ſongs and hymnes; all theſe helpe little, and ſavour little, [c] when I am forſaken by grace, and left in my owne poverty. At ſuch a time there is no better remedy, then patience, and reſigning of my ſelfe to the will of God.

7 I never found any man ſo reli-

gious,

a Joha 3. b Job 7. c Luke 9.

gious, who hath not ſometimes has a withdrawing of grace, or felt not ſome decreaſe of fervour. There was never Saint ſo highly rapt, and illuminated, who was not tempted firſt or laſt. For he is not worthy of the high contemplation of God, who for God hath not beene exerciſed with ſome tribulation: for temptation going before, is wont to be a ſigne of enſuing comfort. Since unto thoſe who are proved by temptation, heavenly comfort is promiſed: [a] *Who ſhall overcome*, ſayes he, *I will give him to eate of the tree of life.*

8 Moreover divine comfort is given, to make a man ſtronger to beare adverſities. And temptations followe, leaſt he ſhould growe proud of that grace. [b] The devill ſleepes not, neither is our fleſh as yet

a Apoc. 2. b 1. Pet. 5.

yet dead: ceaſe not therefore to prepare thy ſelfe for the battle, for on the right hand, and on the left, are enemies, that never reſt.

CHAP. X.

Of gratitude for the grace of God.

1 WHy ſeekes thou reſt, ſince thou art borne to labour? a Diſpoſe thy ſelfe to patience, rather then to conſolation: and to bearing of the croſſe, rather then joy. What ſecular perſon is there that would not willingly receive comfort, and ſpirituall joy, if he could alwayes obtaine it? For ſpirituall comforts excell all the delights of the world, and pleaſures of the fleſh. For all worldly delights are either vaine, or unclean: but ſpirituall delights, are onely pleaſant, and honeſt, produced by vertue, and infuſed by God into pu

a Iob 5. Luke 14.

pure mindes. No man notwithstanding can alwayes injoy theſe divine conſolations at his owne pleaſure; by reaſon that the time of temptation does not long ceaſe.

2 Falſe liberty of minde, and great confidence in our ſelves, are very oppoſite to the heavenly viſitation. God does well in giving the grace of comfort; but man does ill, in not returning it againe wholy to God with thankes-giving. And this is the reaſon why the gifts of grace cannot flowe in us, becauſe we are ungratefull to the giver; and returne them not wholy to the head fountaine. For grace is ever due to him who is worthily thankfull: and that ſhall be taken from the [a] proud, which is wont to be given to the humble.

3 I deſire not that conſolation,

a Eccli. 1.

which bereaves me of compunction: nor doe I affect that contemplation, which leades to haughtineſſe of minde. For all that which is high, is not holy; nor every deſire, pure; nor all that is ſweete, good; neither is every thing that is deare to us, gratefull to God. I doe willingly accept that grace, whereby I may become more humble, and fearfull, and better diſpoſed to forſake my ſelfe. He who is taught by the gift of grace, and inſtructed with the ſcourge of the ſubſtraction thereof, will not dare to attribute any good to himſelfe: but will rather confeſſe himſelfe poore, and naked. [a] Give unto God what is his; and aſcribe that which is thine: that is, give God thankes for his grace, and conceive, that ſinne onely, and the puniſhment due to it, is that which belongs to thee.

a Matth. 22.

4 Put thy ſelfe alwayes in the loweſt place, and the higheſt ſhall be given thee; for the higheſt ſtands not without the loweſt. [a]The greateſt Saints in the ſight of God are the leaſt in their owne opinions. And the more glorious they be, the more humble are they in themſelves. Being full of truth, and heavenly glory, they are not deſirous of vaine glory. Being ſetled, and grounded in God, they can in no ſort be proud And they who aſcribe all unto God, what good ſoever they have received, ſeeke not glory one of another; but would have that glory, which is from God alone; and deſire above all to praiſe God in himſelfe, and all the Saints, and alwayes tend unto the ſame.

5 Be gratefull therefore for the leaſt, and thou ſhalt be made wor-

a Luk. 4.

thy to receive greater. Let the leaſt be unto thee even as the greateſt; and the moſt contemptible as a ſpeciall gift. If thou conſider the worth of the giver, no gift will ſeeme little, or of meane eſteeme. For that is not little, which is given by the greateſt God. Yea though he give puniſhment, and ſtripes, yet ſhould it be gratefull to thee; for whatſoever he permitts to happen to us, is alwayes for our ſalvation. He then who deſires to keepe the grace of God, lett him be thankfull for grace that is given, and patient when it is taken away. Let him pray, that it may returne; and be wary and humble, leaſt he looſe it.

Chap. XI.

Of the few lovers of the Croſſe of Ieſus.

1 IEſus hath now many lovers of his heavenly glory; but few bearers

bearers of his Crosse. He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findes many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to rejoyce with Christ, but few are willing to suffer for him. [a] Many followe Jesus to the breaking of bread: but few to the drinking the cupp of his Passion Many reverence his miracles, but few followe the ignominy of the Crosse. Many love Jesus, whilest they feele no adversities. Many praise, and blesse him, as long as they receive comfort from him. If Jesus hide himselfe, and leave them but a while; they either fall into murmuration, or into too much dejection.

2 But they who love Jesus for Jesus, and not for their owne comfort, blesse him in tribulation and anguish of heart, no lesse then in

[a] Luk. 9. 11.

the higheſt comfort. And if he ſhould never give them comfort, they would notwithſtanding alwayes praiſe him, and alwayes give him thankes.

3 O how powerfull is the pure love of Jeſus, not mixed with ſelfe love, or proper intereſt! Are they not all to be called [a] hirelings, who ever ſeeke comforts? Are not they convinced to be rather lovers of themſelves, then of Chriſt, who thinke alwayes of their owne commodity, and gaine? Where may ſuch a one be found, as will ſerve God without hope of reward?

4 It is rare to finde any one ſo ſpirituall, as to be naked from all things. For where ſhall we finde a man truly poore in ſpirit, and naked from all creatures? [b] Farre from hence, and from the end of the

[a] Phil. 2. [b] Prov 3.

the world is his price If a man ſhall have given all his wealth, yet is it nothing. And if he ſhould have done great auſterities, as pennance, yet is it little. And if he ſhould attaine to all knowledge, yet is he farre of. And if he ſhould have obtained great vertue, and very fervent devotion, yet is there much wanting to him; to wit, one thing, which is the moſt neceſſary of all for him. What is that? That having a left all, he forſake himſelfe, and wholy depart from himſelfe, and retaine no ſpaike of ſelfe love. b And when he ſhall have done all, he knowes to be done, lett him thinke he hath done nothing.

5 Lett him not weigh that much, that may be much eſteemed: but let him confeſſe in truth, that he is an unprofitable ſervant, accor-

a Matth. 16. b Luk. 17.

ding to that saying of truth: a *When you shall have done all that is commanded you, say, that you are unprofitable servants.* Then may he be truly poore, and naked in spirit; and say with the Prophet: b *Because I am all alone, and poore.* Yet no man is richer then he, no man more free, no man more powerfull, then he who knowes how to forsake himselfe, and all things else, and place himselfe in the lowest place.

a Luke 17. Psal. 24.

CHAP. XII.

Of the high way of the holy Crosse.

1 THis speach seemes hard to many: a *Deny thy selfe, take up the Crosse, and followe Iesus.* But it will be much more harsh to heare that last word: b *Goe from me ye accursed, into everlasting fire.* For they who now willingly heare, and fol-

a Matth. 29. b Matth. 5.

followe the Crosse, shall not then feare the sentence of eternall damnation. [a] This signe of the Crosse shall be in heaven, when our Lord shall come to judgement. Then all the servants of the Crosse, who in their life time conformed themselves to Christ crucified, shall draw neare unto Christ their Judge with great confidence.

2 Why therefore doest thou feare to take up the Crosse, which leades to a kingdome? In the Crosse is health, in the Crosse is life, in the Crosse is protection from enemies, in the Crosse is infusion of heavenly sweetnesse, in the Crosse is strength of minde, in the Crosse is joy of spirit, in the Crosse is height of vertue, in the Crosse is perfection of sanctity. [b] There is no health of soule, nor hope of everlasting life, but in the

a Phil. 111. b Luk. 4.

Crosse. Take up therefore thy Crosse, and followe Jesus, and thou shalt goe into everlasting life. He [a]went before carrying his owne Crosse, and dyed for thee on the Crosse; that thou mightest alwayes beare thy Crosse, and desire to dye on the Crosse. For if thou dyest with him, thou shalt live also with him. And if thou beest his companion in paine thou shalt also be his companion in glory.

3 Behold in the Crosse is all, and all consists in dying, and there is no other way to life, and to true inward peace, but the way of the holy Crosse, and dayly mortification. Goe where thou wilt, seeke what thou wilt, and thou shalt not finde a higher way above, nor a securer way below, then the way of the holy Crosse. Dispose, and order all things according to thy will and

a Iohn 19.

and judgement, yet ſhalt thou ever finde that thou muſt ſuffer ſomewhat, either willingly, or againſt thy will: and ſo thou ſhalt ſtill finde the Croſſe. For either thou ſhalt feele paine in thy body, or ſuſtaine in thy ſoule tribulation of ſpirit.

4 Thou ſhalt be ſomething forſaken by God, ſometimes provoked by thy neighbour; and which is more, thou ſhalt be often irkeſome to thy owne ſelfe; neither canſt thou be delivered, or eaſed, by any remedy or comfort: but thou muſt undergoe it, as long as ſhall pleaſe God. For God will have thee learne, to ſuffer temptation without comfort, to ſubmitt thy ſelfe wholy to him, and become more humble by tribulation. No man feeles ſo lively the Paſſion of Chriſt, as he who hath had occaſion to ſuffer the like. The Croſſe there-

therefore is alwayes ready, and every where attends thee. Whitherſoever thou flyeſt, thou canſt not eſcape it: for whereſoever thou goeſt, thou doeſt carry thy ſelfe with thee, and ſhalt alwayes finde thy ſelfe. Turne thy ſelfe to things above, and below thee, without, and within thee: and in all theſe ſhalt thou ſtill finde the Croſſe: and every where of neceſſity thou muſt have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and deſerve an everlaſting crowne.

5 If thou doeſt beare the Croſſe willingly, it will beare thee, and guide thee to thy deſired end; to witt, where there ſhall be an end of ſuffering, though there be none here. If thou doeſt beare it unwillingly, thou makeſt it a burthen to thee, and increaſeſt thy load: and yet thou muſt of neceſſity beare it. If thou doeſt caſt away

the

the Crosse, without doubt thou shalt finde another, and that perhaps more heavy.

6 Thinkest thou to escape that, which no man could ever escape? What Saint was there ever in the world without his Crosse and affliction? Our Lord Jesus Christ himselfe, was not one houre of his life without suffering. [a] *For it behoved that Christ should suffer, and rise from death, and so enter into his glory.* And how doest thou seeke another [b] way, then this royall way, which is the way of the holy Crosse?

7 The whole life of Christ was a Crosse, and martyrdome: and doest thou seeke rest and joy for thy selfe? Thou doest erre, thou doest erre, if thou seekest any other thing, then to suffer tribulation; for this mortall life, is all full

a Luk. 24. b Iob 7.

full of miſery, and ſigned round about with Croſſes. And the greater progreſſe a man makes in ſpirit, the more heavy Croſſes does he often meete withall: becauſe the greife of his exile growes greater through love.

8 But notwithſtanding, this man ſo many wayes afflicted, is not without ſome eaſe of conſolation: becauſe he knowes great good does accrue unto him by bearing of his Croſſe. For whileſt he willingly ſubjects himſelfe to it, all the burthen of a tribulation is turned into confidence of divine comfort. And the more the fleſh is waſted by affliction, ſo much the more is the ſpirit ſtrengthened by interiour conſolation. And ſometimes he is ſo much comforted with this affection to tribulation and adverſity, for the love of conforming him

a 2. Cor. 11. and 12.

himselfe to the Crosse of Christ, that he desires not to be without sorrowe and tribulation: for he beleeves himselfe to be so much more pleasing to God, as he shall be able to suffer more for him. This is not the vertue of man, but the grace of Christ: that can doe, and does to much in fraile flesh, that what it alwayes naturally abhorres, and flyes from, that through fervour of spirit it layes hold of, and loves.

9 It is not according to mans inclination to beare and love the Crosse, to chastise and subdue the body; to fly honours, willingly to indure contumelies, to despise himselfe, and wish to be despised; to suffer all adversities and detriments, and to desire no prosperity in this world. If thou doest looke upon thy selfe, thou canst not doe such things of thy selfe. But if thou doest

confide in our Lord, ſtrength ſhall be given thee from heaven; and the world and the fleſh ſhall be ſubject to thy power. Nor ſhalt thou feare thy enemy the devill, if thou beeſt armed with faith, and ſigned with the Croſſe of Chriſt.

10 Reſolve therefore like a good and faithfull ſervant of Chriſt, to beare manfully the Croſſe of thy Lord, who for thy love was crucified. Prepare thy ſelfe to beare many adverſities, and divers kindes of troubles in this miſerable life; for ſo it will be with thee whereſoever thou art: and ſo ſurely thou wilt finde it, whereſoever thou doeſt hide thy ſelfe. It muſt be ſo with thee of neceſſity: and there is no meanes to avoyde tribulation and Croſſes, but to beare them patiently. Drinke of the chalice of our Lord willingly, if thou doeſt deſire to be his freind, and

have part with him. [a] Leave the desire of comforts to God: lett him doe therein, as best pleases him. [b] Sett thou thy heart upon suffering tribulations, and account them the greatest comforts; [c] for the sufferings of this life are not condigne to the meriting of future glory, which shall be revealed in us, though thou alone couldest suffer them all.

11 When thou shalt come to this passe, that tribulation becomes sweete and savoury to thee for the love of Christ, then conceive it to be well with thee, for thou hast found a paradise upon earth. As long as it is greivous to thee to suffer, and that thou seekest to avoyde it; so long shalt thou be ill at ease, and the tribulation which thou flyest from, will followe thee every where.

a Math.20. b Iohn 18. c Rom.8.

12 If thou do-ſt ſettle thy ſelfe to what thou oughteſt; to witt, [a] to ſuffer, and dye to thy ſelfe; it will quickly be better with thee, and thou ſhalt finde peace. Though thou ſhouldeſt have beene rapt to the third heaven with Saint Paul, thou art not thereby aſſured that thou ſhalt ſuffer no contradiction. *I* (ſayes Jeſus) [b] *will ſhewe him, how great things he muſt ſuffer for my name.* It remaines therefore for thee to ſuffer, if thou doeſt deſire to love Jeſus, and perpetually to ſerve him.

13 I would to God thou wert worthy to ſuffer ſomething for the name of Jeſus: [c] how great glory would it be to thee, how great exultation to all the Saints of God, and how great edification to thy neighbour! for though few deſire to ſuffer, yet all commend patience.

a 2. Cor. xi. and xii. b Acts 9. Acts 1.

ce. With great reaſon oughteſt thou to be willing to ſuffer a little for Chriſt, ſince many ſuffer greater things for the world.

14 Knowe for certaine, that thou oughteſt to leade a dying life.[a] And the more every one dyes to himſelfe, ſo much more does he beginne to live to God. No man is fitt to comprehend heavenly things, who ſubmits not himſelfe to ſuffer adverſities for Chriſt. Nothing is more acceptable to God, nothing more wholeſome to our ſelves in this world, then willingly to ſuffer for Chriſt. And if it were in thy choice, thou ſhouldeſt rather wiſh to ſuffer adverſities for Chriſt, then to be recreated with many comforts; for by that meanes thou ſhouldeſt more reſemble Chriſt, and be more conformable to all the Saints. For the merit and per-

a Pſal. 43.

fection of our ſtate of life, conſiſts not in much ſweetneſſe and comfort; but rather in ſuffering great afflictions, and tribulations.

15 If there had beene any thing better, and more conducing to the ſalvation of man, then ſuffering, Chriſt would ſurely have ſhewed it by word or example. But he plainly exhorted all the diſciples that followed him, and all that deſired to followe him, to beare the Croſſe, ſaying: [a] *If one will come after me, lett him deny himſelfe, and take up his Croſſe, and followe me.* So that when we have read, and ſearched all, lett this be the finall concluſion: [b] *That through many tribulations we muſt enter into the Kingdom of God.*

a Luk 9. b Act 14.

THE III. BOOK OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Of the internall speech of Christ to a faithfull soule.

1 a *I Will hearken to what my Lord God will speake in me.* Blessed is that soule, that heares her Lord speaking in her; and receives from his mouth the word of comfort. b Blessed are those eares, that heare the soft whisperings of Gods inspirations, and listen not to the murmuring noyse of this world. c Blessed in-

a Psal. 84. b 1. Kings 3. c Math. 13.

deede are thoſe eares, that hearken not to the voice which ſounds exteriourly, but to truth ſpeaking, and teaching interiourly. Bleſſed are thoſe eyes, which being ſhutt to all outward things, are open to thoſe within. Bleſſed are they, who penetrate internall things, and endeavour to prepare themſelves more and more by dayly exerciſes, to the attaining of heavenly ſecrets. Bleſſed are they, who attende wholy to God, and ſhake of from them all impediments of the world.

2 Obſerve theſe things, ô my ſoule, and ſhutt up the doores of thy ſenſes: [a] that thou mayeſt heare within thee, what thy Lord God will ſay. Thus ſayes thy beloved: [b] I am thy ſalvation, thy peace, and thy life. Keepe thy ſelfe with me, and thou ſhalt finde peace

a Pſal. 8. b Pſal. 34.

ce. Forsake all transitory things, and seeke for everlasting. What are all transitory things, but deceipts? And what will all creatures availe thee, if thou beest forsaken by thy Creatour, that thou mayest attaine to true happinesse.

CHAP. II.

That Truth speakes interiourly without noyse of wordes.

1 [a] SPeake Lord: for thy servant heares. I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may knowe thy testimonies. Incline my heart to the words of thy mouth; let thy speech distill as dew. The children of Israel in times past said to Moyses: [b] *speake thou to us, and we will heare thee: let not our Lord speake unto us, least perhaps we dye.* Not so Lord, not so I beseech thee: but rather with the Prophet Samuel,

a 1. Kings 3. Psal. 118. b Exod 20.

muel, I humbly and earneſtly intreate: a *Speake Lord; for thy ſervant heares.* Lett not Moyſes ſpeake unto me, nor any of the Prophets: but doe thou rather ſpeake my Lord God, the Inſpirer and Enlightener of all the Prophets: for thou alone without them canſt perfectly inſtruct me; but they without thee can profit nothing.

2 They indeede can pronounce wordes; but give not the ſpirit. They ſpeake exceeding well; but thou being ſilent, they inflame not the heart. They deliver the letters; but thou openeſt the ſenſe. They produce myſteries; but thou diſcloſeſt the ſecret meaning of them. They declare thy commandments; but thou doeſt helpe to fulfill them. They ſhew the way; but thou giveſt ſtrength to walke. They worke onely exteriourly, but thou doeſt

a 1 Kings 3.

doeſt inſtruct, and enlighten the heart. They water the outſide; but thou giveſt fertility. They cry loud with words; but thou giveſt underſtanding to the hearer.

3 Let not Moyſes therefore ſpeake to me, but thou my Lord God eternall Truth: leaſt perhaps I dye, and become fruitleſſe, if I be onely exteriourly warned, and not interiourly inflamed: and leaſt the word being heard, and not fulfilled; knowne, and not loved; beleeved, and not obſerved, ſhould ſerve for judgement againſt me. [a] Speake therefore, ô Lord; for thy ſervant heares. [b] For thou haſt the words of life everlaſting. Speake thou to me, to the comfort of my ſoule, and amendment of my whole life, and to thy praiſe, and glory, and everlaſting honour.

a 1. Kings 3. b Iohn 6.

CHAP. III.

That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

1 SOnne heare my words, words that are moſt ſweete, and ſurpaſſing all the knowledge of the Philoſophers and wiſe men of this world. [a] My words are ſpirit and life, and not to be weighed by humane underſtanding. They are not to be drawne to vaine complacence, but to be heard in ſilence, and to be received with all humility, and great affection. And I ſaid: [b] Bleſſed is the man, whom thou ſhalt inſtruct (ô Lord!) and ſhalt teach him thy law, that thou mayeſt eaſe him from all evill dayes, and that he be not deſtroyed upon earth. [c] I, ſayes our Lord, have taught the Prophets from the begin-

a Iohn 6. b Pſal. 93. c Heb. 1.

beginning, and ceaſe not continually to ſpeake to every one: but many are hardened, and give not eare to my ſpeech.

2 The greater number more willingly liſten to the world, then to God; and followe ſooner the deſires of the fleſh, then the will of God. The world promiſes temporall and ſmall things, and is ſerved with great diligence: I promiſe moſt high, and eternall things, and their hearts are drowſy and dull. Who is he that ſerves and obeyes me in all things, with ſo great care, as the world and the Lords thereof are ſerved? Bluſh ô Sidon, (ſayes the Sea.) And if thou doeſt aske why, heare the reaſon. For a ſmall living, a long voyage is undertaken: but for everlaſting life, many will ſcarce move a foote from the ground. A reward of ſmall worth is ſought after: for a penny

penny there is oftentimes foule contention: for a meere triffle, and ſmall promiſe, men feare not to toyle day and night.

3 Bnt alas, to purchaſe an unchangeable good, and ineſtimable reward, and the ſupreame honour, and eternall glory, they are loath to take the leaſt paines. [a] Bluſh therefore ſloathfull and murmuring ſervant, that they are found more induſtrious to perdition, then thou to life. They rejoyce more in vanity, then thou in truth. [b] They are truly ſometimes fruſtrated of their hopes; [c] but my promiſe deceives none, nor any truſting in me doe I ſend away empty. [d] What I have promiſed, I will performe; [e] what I have ſaid, I will make good; ſo that he remaine faithfull in my love to the end. [f] I am the rewarder of all good

a Eſay 25. b Rom. 1. c Matth. 24. d Matth. 24. e Apoc. 2. f Matth. 25.

good men, and the ſtrong preſerver of all devout perſons.

4 Write my words in thy heart, and weigh them diligently: for they will be very neceſſary in time of temptation. What thou underſtandeſt not, when thou readeſt, thou ſhalt knowe in the day of viſitation. I am wont to viſit my elect two ſeverall wayes; to witt, by temptation, and by conſolation. And read every day two leſſons to them: in the one reprehending their vices, in the other exhorting them to the increaſe of vertues. He, who hath my words, and deſpiſes them, hath one who will judge him at the laſt day.

A Prayer to implore the grace of devotion.

5 O my Lord God, thou art all my good. [a] And who am I, that dare

[a] Geneſ. 18. and 19.

dare ſpeake unto thee? [a] I am thy moſt poore ſervant, and vile worme: much poorer, and more contemptible, then I know, or dare expreſſe. Remember notwithſtanding, ô Lord, that I am nothing, have nothing, and can doe nothing. Thou alone art good, juſt, and holy; thou canſt doe all things, performeſt all things, filleſt all things, leaving a ſinner onely voyd of all good. Remember thy mercies, ô Lord, and fill my heart with thy grace, who wilt not have thy workes be in vaine.

6 How can I ſupport my ſelfe in this miſerable life, unleſſe thy mercy and grace comfort me? [b] Turne not thy face from me: delay not thy viſitation: withdrauwe not thy comfort; [c] leaſt my ſoule become as earth without water. Lord, teach me to fulfill thy will; and teach me to

a 1. Kings 8. b Pſal. 68. c Pſal. 142.

to live worthily, and humbly in thy ſight: for thou art my wiſedome, and doeſt truly knowe me; and dideſt knowe me before the world was made, and before I came into the world.

CHAP. IV.

That we ought to live in truth and humility in the ſight of God.

1 SOnne, walke before me in truth, and ſeeke me alwayes in ſimplicity of heart. [a] He that walkes before me in truth, ſhall be defended from evill incurſions: [b] and truth ſhall deliver him from ſeducers, and from detractions of the wicked. [c] If truth ſhall free thee, thou wilt be truly free, and wilt not care for the vaine ſpeeches of men. O Lord, what thou ſayeſt, is true and accordingly, let it be done with me. Let thy truth teach

a Gen. 17. b Wiſd. 11 c Iohn 8.

teach me, let it keepe me, and bring me to a happy end. Let it deliver me from all evill affection, and all inordinate love: and I ſhall walke with thee in great freedome of heart.

2 I will teach thee (ſayes Truth) thoſe things which are right, and pleaſing in my ſight. Thinke of thy ſinnes with great ſorrowe, and greife: and never eſteeme thy ſelfe to be any thing for thy good workes. Thou art truly a ſinner, ſubject to many paſſions, and intangled. Of thy ſelfe thou alwayes tendeſt to [a] nothing, and art ſoone caſt downe, ſoone overcome, ſoone troubled, ſoone diſſolved. Thou haſt nothing wherein to glory; but many things, for which thou oughteſt to vilifye thy ſelfe: for thou art much weaker, then thou art able to comprehend.

3 Le

a 1. Cor. 4.

Let nothin, therefore, ſeeme much to thee, whatſoever thou doeſt. Let nothing ſeeme great, nothing pretious, nothing to be admired, nothing worthy of eſtimation, nothing glorious, nothing truly commendable, and to be deſired, but what is eternall. Let the eternall truth pleaſe thee above all things, and thy owne great unworthineſſe ever diſpleaſe thee. Feare blame, and fly from nothing ſo much, as thy ſinnes and vices: which ought to diſpleaſe thee more, then any loſſe whatſoever. Some walke not in my ſight ſincerely, but led by a certaine curioſity: and pride will knowe my ſecrets, and underſtand the high myſteries of God, [a] neglecting themſelves, and their owne ſalvation. [b] Theſe, through their pride and curioſity, whileſt I reſiſt them, doe fall often-

a Eccl. 3. b 2 Cor. 3.

times into great temptations and sinnes.

4 Feare the judgements of God, dread the wrath of the Almighty. Discusse not the workes of the Highest; but search thine owne iniquities, how many wayes thou hast offended, and how much good thou hast neglected. Some carry their devotion onely in bookes, some in pictures, some in outward signes and figures. [a] Some have me in their mouth, but little in their heart. There are others, who having their [b] understandings illuminated, and their affections purified, doe aspire continually to everlasting happinesse: are unwilling to heare of earthly things, and greive to be subject to the necessities of nature. And these feele what the spirit of Truth speaks in them; because it teaches them

a Esay 29. b Psal 24.

to despise earthly, and love heavenly things: [a] to neglect the world, and all day, and night, to desire Heaven.

a Psal. 1.

CHAP. V.

Of the wonderfull effect of divine Love.

I BLesse thee ô heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, who hast vouchsafed to be mindfull of me poore wretch. [a] O Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, I give thee thankes, who sometimes doest comfort me, unworthy of all comfort. I evermore blesse, and glorify thee, with thy onely begotten Sonne, and holy Ghost the comforter for ever and ever. O my Lord God, my holy lover, when thou shalt come into my heart, all my interiour will

a 2 Cor. 1.

rejoyce. [a] Thou art my glory, and the exultation of my heart. [b] Thou art my hope, and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2 But becauſe I am yet weake in love, and imperfect in vertue; I have therefore neede to be comforted, and ſtrenghtened by thee. Wherefore viſit me often, and inſtruct me with thy holy diſcipline. Deliver me from evill paſſions, and heale my heart from all inordinate affections: that being cured within, and well purged, I may be made fit to love, ſtrong to ſuffer, and conſtant to perſever.

3 Love is a great thing, and a ſouveraigne good: which alone makes all that is heavy light, and beares equally all unequall burthens. For it ſupports the burthen without burthen, and that which is bitter, it makes ſweete and ſa-

voury

[a] Pſal. 3. [b] Pſal. 13.

voury. The noble love of Jesus spurres on to noble actions, and excites alwayes a desire of greater perfection. Love still aymes at high matters, and will not be kept downe by base things. Love will be free, and estranged from all worldly affection to the end that the interiour sight thereof may not be obscured, and that it may not be intangled by any temporall commodity, nor cast downe by any incommodity. Nothing is sweeter then love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing more full or better in heaven or in earth: for love proceedes from God, and cannot rest but in God, above all that is created.

4 Whosoever loves he flyes, runnes, and rejoyces; he is free, and not to be retained. He gives all for all, and hath all in all; since he rests

in one ſupreame above all; from whom all good does flow and proceede. He regards not the gift, but converts himſelfe to the giver above all good things. Love often knowes no meaſure, but is fervent above all meaſure. Love feeles no burthen, weighs no paines; affects more, then it can doe; complaines not of impoſſibility, becauſe it cõceives all things to be lawfull, and poſſible to it. And therefore it is able to do all, and fulfills many things, [a] and ſubdues them to the affection, whereas he that does not love, faints and falls downe.

5 Love watches, and ſleeping ſleepes not. Being wearyed, is not tired; ſtraightened, is not oppreſſed; frighted, is not troubled: but like a lively flame, and firy ſparkle, aſcends forcibly, & paſſes through ſecurely. He that loves, knowes what

a Rom. 8.

what this voice cryes: A loude cry in the eares of God, is the burning love of the ſoule, which ſayes: O my God, my love: thou art wholy mine, and I wholy thine.

6 Encreaſe my love, that I may learne with the interiour mouth of my heart to taſte, how ſweete it is to love, and to be diſſolved, and ſwimme in love. Let me be ſeized with love, aſcending above my ſelfe through exceſſe of fervour, and amazement. Let me ſing the ſong of love, and followe thee my beloved aſcending on high; let my ſoule faint in thy praiſe, and rejoyce through love. Let me love thee more then my ſelfe; and my ſelfe onely for thee: and all in thee, who do truly love thee; as the law of love commands which ſhines from thee.

7 Love is ſwift, ſincere, pious, pleaſant, and delightfull; ſtrong,

patient, faithfull, prudent, long ſuffering, couragious, and never ſeeking it ſelfe: [a] for where a man ſeekes himſelfe, there he falls from love. Love is circumſpect, humble, and upright: not remiſſe, nor light, nor given to vanity; ſober, chaſte, ſtable, quiet, and watchfull over all the ſenſes. [b] Love is ſubject, and obedient to Prelates; vile and abject to it ſelfe, devout and gratefull to God, alwayes truſting and hoping in him, even when it hath no taſte of God: for there is no living in love without paine.

8 Whoſoever is not ready to ſuffer all things, and to ſubmit himſelfe to the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover ought for his beloved, willingly to embrace all that is hard, and bitter; and never to forſake him for any accidents whatſoever.

a 1. Cor. 13. and Phil. 2. b 1. Cor. 10. Phil. 2.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the proofe of true love.

1 SOnne, thou art not yet a ſtrong and prudent lover. Why Lord? [a] Becauſe thou giveſt over for a ſmall adverſity, and ſeekeſt comfort too earneſtly. A ſtout lover is ſtable in temptations, and gives no credit to the crafty perſwaſions of the enemy. As I pleaſe him in proſperity, ſo am I not diſpleaſing to him in adverſity.

2 A prudent lover conſiders not ſo much the gift of the lover, as the love of the giver. He more eſteemes the good will, then the value; and places all gifts beneath his beloved. A noble lover reſts not in the gift, but in me above any gift. All is not therefore loſt, becauſe thou haſt ſometimes leſſe taſte of me, and my ſaints,

[a] Phil. 4.

then thou wouldeſt. That good and ſweete deſire, which thou ſometimes feeleſt, is the effect of preſent grace, and a certaine foretaſte of the heavenly country: whereon we muſt not rely too much; becauſe it comes, and goes. [a] But to fight againſt the evill motions of the minde, which may ariſe, and to deſpiſe the ſuggeſtions of the devill, that is a ſigne of vertue, and of great merit.

3 Let not therefore ſtrange fancies forced into thee, of what matter ſoever, trouble thee. Doe thou retaine a firme purpoſe, and an upright intention to God. Neither is it an illuſion, when ſuddenly thou art rapt on high, and preſently returneſt to thy accuſtomed fooliſh cogitations of heart. For thou doeſt rather unwillingly ſuffer them, then cauſe them: and as long

[a] Matth. 4.

long as they displease thee, and thou striveſt againſt them, it is merit, and no loſſe.

4 Knowe, that thy ancient enemy does ſtrive altogether to hinder thy good deſires, and to divert thee from all devout exerciſes; to wit, from the worſhipping of the Saints, from the devout memory of my Paſſion, from the profitable remembrance of thy ſinnes, from the cuſtody of thy owne heart, and from a firme purpoſe of profiting in vertue. He ſuggeſts to thee many evill cogitations, that he may cauſe thee to feele a teadiouſneſſe, and horrour, and ſo withdrawe thee from prayer, and reading of devout bookes. Humble confeſſion does diſpleaſe him, and if he could, he would make thee quit the holy Communion. Truſt him not, nor care for him, though he often ſett ſnares of deceipt to intrap

trap thee. Charge him with it, when he ſuggeſts evill, and uncleane things. And ſay unto him: [a] Away uncleane ſpirit, bluſh miſerable wretch; thou art very filthy, who bringeſt ſuch things to my eares. Depart from me, wicked deceiver, thou ſhalt have no part in me, but Jeſus ſhall be with me as a ſtrong warriour, and thou ſhalt remaine confounded. I had rather dye, and undergoe any torment, then conſent unto thee. Hold thy peace, and be ſilent; though thou trouble me never ſo much, I will heare thee no more. [b] My Lord is my light, and my ſalvation, whom ſhall I feare? If whole armies were againſt me, my heart ſhall not be afraid. The Lord is my helper, and my Redeemer.

5 Fight like a good ſouldier: and if thou doeſt fall ſometimes through

a Matth. 4. and 10. b Pſal. 106.

through frailty, recover greater forces then before, hoping to receive more aboundant grace: and take heede of vaine complacence, and pride. Many are lead thereby into errour, and fall oftentimes into almoſt incurable blindneſſe. Let this fall of proud perſons, fooliſhly preſuming of themſelves, ſerve thee for a warning, and to conſerve thee continually in humility.

CHAP. VII.

That grace is to be hidd under the vaile of humility.

1 SOnne, it is more profitable, and ſecure for thee, to hide the grace of devotion, and not to extoll thy ſelfe, nor ſpeake much thereof, nor value it much: but rather deſpiſe thy ſelfe, and be afraid of it as given to one unworthy. This affection is not to be cleaved unto, which may be quickly changed

ged into the contrary. Thinke when thou art in grace, how miſerable and needy thou art wont to be without it. Neither does the proffit of a ſpirituall life, conſiſt ſo much in receiving the grace of comfort, as in the humble reſigned patient ſuffering the withdrawing thereof: ſo that it make thee not more ſloathfull in the exerciſe of prayer, nor to permit thy ſelfe to neglect the reſt of thy accuſtomed good workes: but that thou willingly performe what lyes in thee, according to thy ability and underſtanding; not wholy neglecting thy ſelfe, through the dryneſſe and anxiety of minde which thou feeleſt.

2 For there be many, who when it ſucceedes not well with them, become forthwith impatient, or ſloathfull. [a] The way of man is not alwayes

a Ier 10. and Rom 9.

alwayes in his owne power; but it belongs to God to give, and to comfort when he will, how much he will, and whom he will, as it shall please him, and no more. Some unadvisedly have ruined themselves, through the grace of devotion; because they would doe more then they well could, not weighing the measure of their weakness; but following the desire of their heart, rather then the judgement of reason. And because they presumed of greater matters, then were pleasing to God, they therefore lost his grace. They who built themselves nests in heaven, were made needy, and left in a dejected state: to the end that being humbled, and impoverished, they may learne not to fly with their owne wings, but to hope under mine. Those who are yet new, and unacquainted in the way of our

Lord,

Lord, unleſſe they gouverne themſelves by the counceil of diſcreete perſons, may eaſily be deceived and overthrowne.

3 And if they will rather followe their owne judgement, then beleeve others that are experienced, their end will be dangerous, if they cannot be withdrawne from their owne conceipts. Thoſe who are wiſe in their owne opinions, ſeldome ſuffer themſelves humbly to be gouerned by others. A little knowledge with humility, and a weake underſtanding, is better then great treaſures of learning with vaine complacence. [a] It is better for thee to have leſſe, then much, of that whereof thou mayeſt be proud. He does not diſcreetly, that gives himſelfe wholy to mirth, forgetting his former want, and the chaſte feare of God, which feares

a Prov. 15. and 16.

feares to looſe the grace that is offered. Neither is he alſo virtuouſly wiſe enough, who in time of adverſity, or any tribulation whatſoever, gives way to thoughts of diſpaire, and thinkes, and conceives leſſe confidently of me, then he ought.

4 He who is too ſecure in time of peace, [a] will be found often in time of warre too much dejected, and fearfull. If thou couldeſt alwayes continue humble, and lowly within thy ſelfe, and temper, and governe thy ſoule well; thou wouldeſt not ſo ſoone fall into danger, and offence. [b] It is good counſell, that when thou conceivest fervour of ſpirit, thou ſhouldeſt thinke, what will become of thee, when that light ſhall leave thee. And if that happen, to remember, that light may returne,

a 1. Theſſ. 3. b Iob 17.

which for thy instruction, and my glory, I have for a time withdrawne.

5 Such a triall is oftentimes more profitable, then if thou shouldest alwayes enjoy prosperity, according to thy desire. For a mans deserts are not to be judged by the many visions, and comforts which he receivəs; nor by his knowledge in Scriptures, nor by his being placed in high degree: but by his being [a] grounded in true humility, and repleni shed with divine charity: and that he alwayes seekes purely and intirely the honour of God; and esteemes nothing of himselfe, but with a sincere heart does despise himselfe, and rejoyces more to be despised, and humbled by others, then to be honoured.

a Psal. 93.

CHAP. VIII.

Of a meane esteeme of one selfe in the sight of God.

1 [a] I Will speake to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes. If I esteeme better of my selfe, behold thou doest resist me: and my iniquities beare true witnesse against me, nor can I contradict them. But if I abuse my selfe, and reduce my selfe to nothing, and cast away all selfe conceipt, and account my selfe, as I am, but dust; thy grace will be favourable to me, and thy light neare my heart: and all estimation, how little soever, will be swallowed up in the depth of my nothing, and perish for ever. Then wilt thou shewe me my selfe, what I am, what I have beene, and from what I came: for I am nothing, and

a Gen. 18.

knew it not. If I be left to my ſelfe, behold I become nothing, and a maſſe of infirmity. But if thou ſuddenly looke upon me, I am preſently ſtrenghened, and repleniſhed with new joy. And it is very wonderfull, that I (who of my owne weight ſinke continually to the ground) am ſo ſuddenly raiſed, and ſo graciouſly embraced by thee.

2 It is thy love that does this, preventing and relieving me freely in ſo many neceſſities, preſerving me alſo from greivous perills, and delivering me (as I may truly ſay) from innumerable evills. [a] For by ill loving of my ſelfe, I loſt my ſelfe: and by ſeeking thee alone, and purely loving thee, I have found both my ſelfe, and thee; and through thy love have brought my ſelfe more profoundly to nothing.

a. Iohn 12.

thing. For that thou, ô moſt ſweete Jeſus, doeſt deale with me above all deſert, and above all that I dare hope, or aske for.

3 Bleſſed be thou my God: for although I be unworthy of all good, yet thy nobleneſſe, and infinite goodneſſe ceaſe not to doe good, even to the ungratefull, and ſuch as are averted from thee. Convert us unto thee, that we may be gratefull, humble, and devout: for thou art our ſafety, our power, and our ſtrength.

CHAP. IX.

That all things are to be referred unto God, as to the laſt end.

1 SOnne, I ought to be thy ſupreame and laſt end, if thou deſire to be truly bleſſed. By this intention, thy affection, which is oftentimes inclined inordinately to it ſelfe, and unto creatures, ſhall be

purified. For if thou ſeekeſt thy ſelfe in any thing, thou doeſt preſently wither, and dry up. Referre therefore all things cheifly to me, for it is I who have given thee all. Doe thou conſider every thing, as flowing from the ſouveraigne good: and therefore all things are to be reduced unto me, as to their firſt beginning.

2 Out of me, as out of a living fountaine, the little and great, rich and poore, doe drawe the water of life: [a] And whoſoever ſhall willingly and freely ſerve me, he ſhall receive grace for grace. [b] But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any particular good, ſhall not be grounded in true joy, nor injoy freedome of heart, but ſhall many wayes be hindered, and ſtraightened. Thou muſt aſcribe therefore no good to thy ſelfe, nor attri-

a Iohn 4. b 1. Cor. 1.

attribute vertue to any man; but give all unto God, without whom man hath nothing. [a] I have given all, and I will have all returned to me again: and with great severity require a gratefull acknowledgement.

3 This is the truth, by which vaine glory is put to flight And where heavenly grace, and true charity enter, there no envy, nor grudging of heart shall abide, nor no place be left for selfe love. For divine charity overcomes all, and dilates all the forces of the soule [b] If thou best truly wise, thou wilt rejoyce, and hope in none, but me: for none is good, but onely God, who is to be praised above all, and in all to be blessed, for ever and ever. Amen.

a 1. Cor 4. b Math. 19. and Luke 18.

CHAP. X.

That despising the world, it is sweete to serve God.

1 NOw will I speake againe, ô my Lord, and will not be silent. I will say in the hearing of my God, my Lord, and King, that is on high: [a] O how great is the multitude of thy sweetnesse, ô Lord, which thou hast layd up for those that feare thee! But what art thou to those that feare and love thee? What to those who serve thee with all their heart? Unspeakable indeede is the sweetnesse of thy contemplation, which thou bestowest on them that love thee. [b] In this most of all hast thou shewed me the sweetnesse of thy charity, that when I had no being, thou didst make me: and when I strayed farre from thee, thou didst bring me

a Psal. 30. b Gen. 1. Psal. 118. and Math. 15.

me back againe, that I might ſerve thee: and haſt commanded me to love thee.

2 O fountaine of everlaſting love, what ſhall I ſay of thee? How can I forget thee, who haſt vouchſafed to remember me, even when I withered away, and periſhed? Thou haſt uſed mercy to thy ſervant above all hope: and beyond all deſert, haſt vouchſafed me thy favour and freindſhip. What ſhall I returne to thee for this grace? For it is not granted to all, to forſake all, to renounce the world, and embrace a monaſticall life. [a] Is it much, that I ſerve thee, whom all creatures are bound to ſerve? It ought not to ſeeme much to me to ſerve thee: but rather this ſeemes wonderfull to me, that thou haſt vouchſafed to admit into thy ſervice ſo poore and unworthy a

[a] Iudith 16.

wretch, and to associate him to thy beloved servants.

3 Behold all is thine that I have, and doe serve thee withall. And yet in truth, thou rather serveſt me, then I thee. Behold heaven and earth, which thou haſt created for the service of man, they are ready at hand, and doe dayly performe whatsoever thou haſt commanded. [a] And this is but little, for thou haſt moreover created, and appointed the Angells for the service of man. [b] But which is farre above all, thou thy selfe haſt vouchsafed to serve man, and promiſed to give thy selfe unto him.

4 What shall I give thee for all theſe thousands of benefits? O that I could serve thee all the dayes of my life. O that I were able at leaſt one day to serve thee worthily. Thou art indeede worthy of all ser-

[a] 1. Cor. 4. [b] Pſal 90. and Heb. 1.

ſervice, of all honour, and everla-ſting praiſe. Thou art truly my Lord, and I thy poore ſervant, who am bound to ſerve thee with all my forces, and never growe weary of praiſing thee. This is my wiſh, this my deſire: and whatſo-ever is wanting in me, vouchſafe to ſupply it I beſeech thee.

5 It is a great honour, great glo-ry, to ſerve thee, and deſpiſe all things for thee. For they ſhall re-ceive great grace, who willingly ſubject themſelves to thy holy ſer-vice. They ſhall finde the moſt ſweete comfort of the holy Ghoſt, who for thy love ſhall renounce all carnall delight. They ſhall attaine great freedome of minde, who for thy name [a] enter into the narrow way, and ſhall neglect all care of the world.

6 O ſweete and delightfull ſer-vice

[a] Math. 7.

vice of God, by which man is made truly free, and holy! O ſacred ſtate of religious bondage, [a] which makes man equall to Angells, pleaſing to God, terrible to devill, and commendable to all faithfull people! O ſervice to be embraced, and alwayes wiſhed for, by which the greateſt good is obtained, and that joy acquired, which ſhall never have end.

a Math. 11. and Iohn 13.

CHAP. XI.

That the deſires of our heart are to be examined, and moderated.

[1] SOnne, thou muſt learne many things, which thou haſt not yet well learned. [a] What are thoſe Lord? [b] That thou frame thy deſire wholy according to my pleaſure: and be no lover of thy ſelfe, but a diligent lover and follower

a Pſal. 107. b Math. 6.

lower of my will. Thy desires doe oftentimes stirre thee up, and violently drive thee: but consider, whither thou art moved rather for my honour, then thy owne profit. If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content with whatsoever I shall ordaine; but if there lurke in thee any selfe inclination, behold this is it, that hinders and weighes thee downe.

2 Beware therefore, thou relye not too much upon any desire that comes to thy minde, before thou hast consulted with me; least perhaps afterward it repent thee, and that dislike thee, which before pleased thee, and which thou didst earnestly desire as the best. For every affection, which seemes good, is not presently to be followed: nor every contrary affection to be rejected. It is expedient sometimes to

a Phil 2.

to uſe a reſtraint, even in good deſires and endeavours; leaſt through importunity thou ſhouldeſt incurre diſtraction of minde; or by ill example, become a ſcandall to others; or elſe being oppoſed by others, ſuddenly become troubled, and fall.

3 a Sometimes notwithſtanding we muſt uſe violence, and manfully reſiſt the ſenſuall appetite; and not regard what the fleſh would, or would not: but rather labour, that even perforce it become ſubject to the ſpirit. And it is ſo long to be chaſtiſed, and kept under ſervitude, untill it readily obey in all things, and learne to be content with a little, and to be pleaſed with ordinary things, and not to murmure at any inconvenience.

a Math. 11. Rom. 8. 2. Cor. 4. 2. Cor. 10. 1. Cor. 9.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of the effect of patience, and strife against concupiscence.

1 O Lord God, patience, as I perceive, is very necessary for me, [a] since many adversities doe happen in this life. [b] For howsoever I dispose of my peace, my life cannot be without warre and affliction. So it is sonne. But my will is not, that thou seeke after that peace, which is voyde of temptations, or that feeles no contrarieties: but then conceive thou hast found peace, when thou shalt be exercised with sundry [c] tribulations and tried in many adversities.

2 If thou say, thou art not able to suffer much, how wilt thou then endure the fire of purgatory? Of two evills the least is alwayes to be chosen. That thou mayest there-

a Heb. 10. b Iob 7. c Iam. 1.

therefore avoyde everlasting punishment in the world to come, endeavour to suffer patiently for God the present evills of this. Doest thou thinke that men of this world suffer little or nothing? Thou shalt not finde it so, though thou seeke out those that live in greatest delicacies. But they have, sayest thou, many delights and followe their owne wills: and therefore make small account of their tribulations. Be it so that they have whatsoever they will, but how long doest thou thinke it will last?

3 Behold all those, who abound in this world, shall vanish away like smoake, and there shall be no memory of their past joyes. [a] Yea even also, whilest they live, they rest not in them without greife, irksomnesse, and feare. For the very same thing, in which they take delight,

a Psal 67.

delight, does often cause them sorrowe and affliction. It is but justice, that they who inordinately seeke and followe pleasures, should not obtaine them without bitternesse and confusion.

4 O how short, hoe deceiptfull, how inordinate and filthy are all those pleasures? yet through drunkenesse and blindnesse men understand not, but like dumbe beasts, for a little pleasure of a corruptible life they incurre the eternall of their soules. Doe not thou therefore, my sonne, runne after thy concupiscences, but forsake thy owne will. [a] Delight in our Lord, and he will grant thee the petitions of thy heart.

5 For if thou wilt indeede be truly delighted, and more aboundantly comforted by me, behold in the contempt of all worldly things,

a Psal. 36.

and in cutting of all baſe delights ſhall be thy bleſſing, and aboundant comfort ſhall be given thee. And ſo much the more as thou withdraweſt thy ſelfe from all ſolace of creatures, ſo much the ſweeter and more powerfull conſolations ſhalt thou finde in me. But thou ſhalt not at firſt attaine unto them without a certaine greiſe and labour of ſtrife. The old cuſtome will make reſiſtance; but by a better cuſtome it ſhall be overcome. The fleſh will murmure; but by fervour of ſpirit it ſhall be quelled. The old ſerpent will ſting and trouble thee; but by prayer he ſhall be put to flight, and through profitable labour his ſtrong aſſault ſhall be repulſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the obedience of an humble subject according to the example of Iesus Christ.

1 SOnne, whosoever endeavours to [a] withdrawe himselfe from obedience, withdrawes himselfe from grace. And he that desires private things, shall loose the common If any one does not willingly and freely submit himselfe to his superiour, it is a signe that his flesh is not perfectly obedient to him, but oftentimes rebells and murmures. Learne therefore readily to submit thy selfe to thy superiour, if thou desirest to subdue thy owne flesh. For the exteriour enemy is sooner overcome, if the interiour be not out of order. There is no worse, nor more troublesome enemy to the soule, then

a Math. 16.

thou to thy ſelfe, not agreeing well with the ſpirit. For of neceſſity thou muſt have a true contempt of thy ſelfe, if thou wilt prevaile againſt fleſh and bloud.

2 Becauſe thou yet loveſt thy ſelfe too inordinately, thou art therefore afraid to reſigne thy ſelfe wholy to the will of others. But what great matter is it, if thou, who art duſt and nothing, ſubmitteſt thy ſelfe to man for God, [a] when I the Almighty and higheſt Soveraigne, who created all things of nothing, have humbly ſubmitted my ſelfe to man for thee? I became the moſt humble and abject of all men, that thou mighteſt overcome thy pride by my humility. Learne to obey thou who art duſt, learne to humble thy ſelfe thou who art earth and clay, and put thy ſelfe under the feete of all

[a] Luke 2: 1. Iohn 8.

all men. Learne to breake thy owne will, and to yeild thy ſelfe to all ſubjection.

3 Take courage againſt thy ſelfe, and ſuffer not pride to live in thee: but humble and ſubmit thy ſelfe in ſuch manner, that every one may trample on thee, and treade thee under their feete as durt of the ſtreetes. O vaine man, what canſt thou complaine of? What canſt thou anſwer, foule ſinner, to them that reproove thee, who haſt ſo many times offended God and deſerved hell? But my eye hath ſpared thee, becauſe thy ſoule was precious in my ſight, that thou mighteſt knowe my love, and alwayes remaine gratefull for my benefits: and that thou mighteſt give thy ſelfe continually to true ſubjection and humility, and mighteſt beare patiently all contempt.

Chap. XIV.

Of the ſecret judgements of God to be conſidered, leaſt we be extolled in our good deedes.

1 [a] THou thundreſt thy judgements over me, ô Lord, and ſhakeſt all my bones with feare and trembling, and my ſoule is ſore afraid. [b] I ſtand aſtoniſhed, and conſider for that the heavens are not pure in thy ſight. If thou haſt found wickedneſſe in the Angells, and haſt not pardoned them, what ſhall become of me? [c] Starres fell from heaven, and what doe I preſume, who am but duſt? They whoſe workes ſeemed laudable, fell into the loweſt hell; [d] and thoſe who have eaten the bread of Angells, I have ſeene delighted with the huskens of ſwine.

2 There is therefore no ſanctity, if

a Iob 15. b Iob 4. c Apoc. 8. d Pſal. 77.

if thou, ô Lord, withdraweſt thy hand. No wiſdome availes, if thou ceaſeſt to gouverne. No ſtrength helpes, if thou leaveſt to conſerve. No charity is ſecure, if thou doeſt not protect it. No cuſtody of our owne profitable, if thy ſacred vigilancy be not preſent. For if thou leaveſt us, we ſinke and periſh; but if thou doeſt viſit us, we live and are raiſed up. We are unconſtant, but by thee we are confirmed. We growe cold, but by thee we are inflamed.

3 O how humbly and baſely ought I to thinke of my ſelfe! how little ought I to eſteeme it, if I ſeeme to have any good! O Lord, how profoundly ought I to ſubmit my ſelfe under the abyſſe of thy judgements! where I finde my ſelfe to be nothing elſe but nothing and nothing. O immenſe weight! O ſea that can never be

paſſed over! where I finde my ſelfe nothing but wholy nothing. Where then is the lurking hole of glory? Where confidence conceived of glory? All vaine glory is ſwallowed up in the depth of thy judgements, which hang over me.

4 [a] What is all fleſh in thy ſight? Shall clay glory againſt him that frames it? How can he be puffed up with vaine wordes, whoſe heart is truly ſubject to God? All the world can not puffe him up, whom truth hath ſubjected to it ſelfe; neither ſhall he, who hath ſettled his whole hope in God, be moved with the tongues of thoſe that praiſe him. For behold even all they that ſpeake are nothing, for they ſhall paſſe away with the ſound of thy wordes. [b] But the truth of our Lord remaines for ever.

a Eccl.23. and Eſay 19. b Pſal.116.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

What we ought to doe and say in every thing we desire.

1 SOnne say thus in every thing: O Lord, if it be pleasing to thee, let it be done in this sort. [a] Lord, if it be to thy honour, let it be done in thy Name. Lord, if thou seest and approvest it to be expedient and profitable for me, then grant that I may use it to thy honour. But if thou knowest it will be hurtfull for me, and not conducing to the health of my soule, take from me such a desire. For every desire is not from the holy Ghost, though it seeme to man right and good. It is hard to judge truly, whither a good spirit or the contrary drives thee to desire this or that, or whither thou art moved to it by thy owne spirit.

a Iam. 3.

Many are deceived in the end, who at firſt ſeemed to be lead by a good ſpirit.

2 Whatſoever therefore occurres to thy minde to be deſired and demanded, let it alwayes be deſired with the feare of God, and humility of heart, and above all with reſignation of thy ſelfe thou art to commit all to me, and ſay: O Lord, thou knoweſt what is beſt, doe this or that, as thou pleaſeſt. Give what thou wilt, how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Doe with me as thou knoweſt, and as beſt pleaſes thee, and is moſt for thy honour. Put me where thou wilt, and freely diſpoſe of me in all things. I am in thy hand; turne me, and winde me about as thou pleaſeſt. Behold I am thy ſervant, ready to all things: for I deſire not to live to my ſelfe, but to thee. I pray God it may be perfectly and worthily.

A prayer for the fulfilling of the will of God.

3 Grant me thy grace, moſt mercifull Jeſus, [a] that it may be with me, and labour with me, and perſevere with me to the end. Grant me alwayes to will and deſire that which is moſt acceptable to thee, and beſt pleaſes thee. Let thy will be mine, and let my ever followe thine, and agree perfectly with it. Let my will and nill be all one with thine, and let me not be able to will or refuſe any thing but what thou will'eſt and reject ſt.

4 Grant that I may dye to all that is in the world, and love for thy ſake to be contemned, and not to be knowne in this world. Grant that above all things that can be deſired, I may reſt in thee, and bring my heart to enjoy peace in thee.

a Wiſd. 9.

thee. Thou art the true peace of the heart, thou art the onely reſt: out of thee, all things are troubleſome and unquiet. [a] In peace in the ſelfe ſame, that is in thee, the one ſouveraigne and eternall good, I will ſleepe and reſt.

a Pſal. 4.

CHAP. XVI.

That true comfort is to be ſought in God alone.

1 WHatſoever I can deſire or imagine for my comfort, I expect not in this life, but hereafter. [a] For if I alone ſhould have all the comforts of the world, and might enjoy all the riches of it, it is certaine they can not laſt long. [b] Wherefore thou canſt not, my ſoule, be fully comforted, nor perfectly delighted but in God, the comforter of the poore, and the recei-

a Matth. 16. b Pſal 76.

receiver of the humble. Expect a little while, my ſoule, expect the divine promiſe, and thou ſhalt have aboundance of all good things in heaven. If thou doeſt too inordinately deſire theſe preſent things, thou ſhalt looſe thoſe that are celeſtiall and eternall. Have temporall things in uſe, and eternall in deſire. Thou canſt not be ſatiated with any temporall good, becauſe thou art not created to enjoy them.

2 Although thou ſhouldeſt enjoy all that is created, yet cannot that make thee happy nor bleſſed. But in God, who created all things, does thy beatitude and happineſſe conſiſt: [a] not ſuch as is ſeene and praiſed by the fooliſh lovers of this world; but ſuch as the good faithfull ſervants of Chriſt expect, [b] and of which the ſpirituall and cleane of heart (whoſe converſation

a Wiſd. 2. b Phil. 3.

tion is in heaven) have ſometimes a foretaſt. Vaine and ſhort is all humane ſolace: bleſſed and true is that which is received inwardly through Truth. A devout man carryes every where about with him his comforter Jeſus, and ſayes unto him: Be preſent unto me, Lord Jeſus, at all times and in all places. Let this be my conſolation, to be alwayes willing to want all humane ſolace; and if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will and juſt probation be to me as the greateſt comfort. [a] For thou wilt not be angry alwayes, neither wilt thou threaten for ever.

a Pſal. 102.

CHAP. XVII.

That we ought to caſt all our care upon God.

1 SOnne, ſuffer me to doe with thee what I will: I knowe what

what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkeſt as man: thou judgeſt in many things as humane affection perſwades thee. It is true, Lord, as thou ſayeſt. Thy ſollicitude over me is greater then all the care I can take for my ſelfe. [a] For he ſtands at too great a hazard, who caſts not his whole care upon thee. Lord, as long as my will remaines right and firme in thee, doe with me whatſoever it ſhall pleaſe thee: for it cannot but be good whatſoever thou doeſt with me.

2 If thou wilt have me be in darkneſſe, be thou bleſſed: and if thou wilt have me be in light, be thou againe bleſſed. If thou doeſt vouchſafe to comfort me, be thou bleſſed: and if thou wilt have me afflicted, be thou equally ever bleſſed. Sonne, in this ſtate muſt thou ſtand, if thou doeſt deſire to walke

a Math. 6. and Iohn 6.

walke with me. Thou muſt be as ready to ſuffer, as to rejoyce. Thou muſt be as willing to be poore and needy, as plentifull and rich.

8 Lord I will ſuffer willingly for thee, whatſoever thy pleaſure is ſhall befall me. I will receive indifferently from thy hand good and evill, ſweete and bitter, joyfull and ſorrowfull;[a] and will give thee thankes for all that happens to me. Keepe me from all ſinne, and I will feare neither death nor hell. As long as thou doeſt not caſt me from thee for ever, nor blott me out of the booke of life, what tribulation ſoever ſhall befall me, ſhall not hurt me.

Pſal. 22.

CHAP. XVIII.

That temporall miseries by the example of Christ are to be borne patiently.

1[a] SOnne, I descended from heaven for thy salvation. [b] I tooke upon me thy miseries, not of necessity, but drawne to it by charity; that thou mightest learne patience, and willingly to beare temporall miseries. For from the houre of my birth untill my death on the Crosse I was not without suffering I suffered great want of temporall things. I heard frequently many complaints against me. I meekely sustained opprobries and confusions For benefits I received ingratitude: for miracles, blasphemies: for doctrine, reprehensions..

2 Lord, [c] since thou wert patient

a Iohn 3 b Esay 53. Luke 2. c Iohn 5.

in thy life time, in this cheifly fulfilling the commandment of thy Father; it is juſt that I, moſt miſerable ſinner, ſhould according to thy will patiently behave my ſelfe: and for my owne ſalvation beare the burthen of this corruptible life, as long as thou pleaſeſt. For though this preſent life be felt burthenſome, yet notwithſtanding now by thy grace it is made very meritorious, and by thy example, and the footeſteppes of thy Saints, more plaine and tolerable to the weake. Yea much more comfortable, alſo then it was in times paſt in the old Law, when the gate of heaven was ſhut; and the way thither ſeemed alſo darker, when ſo few tooke care to ſeeke after the kingdome of heaven. [a] Neither could they, who were then juſt and to be ſaved, enter into the heaven-

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[a] Matth 7.

ly Kingdome, before thy Paſſion and the debt of thy ſacred Death was diſcharged.

3 O how great thankes am I bound to give thee, who haſt vouchſafed to ſhewe unto me, and all faithfull ſoules, a right and good way to thy everlaſting Kingdome! For thy life is our way: and by holy patience we walke to thee, who art our Crowne. If thou hadſt not gone before, and taught us, who would have taken care to followe? Alas, how many would ſtay behinde, and remaine farre of, if they beheld not thy excellent examples? Behold, we are yet cold, though we have heard of ſo many of thy wonders and documents: what would become of us, if we had not ſo great light to followe thee.

CHAP. XIX.

Of ſuffering of injuries, and who is proved to be truly patient.

1 WHat is it thou ſayeſt, Sonne? Ceaſe to complaine conſidering my Paſſion, and that of other Saints. [a] Thou haſt not yet reſiſted to the ſhedding of bloud. [b] It is but little thou ſuffereſt in compariſon of them, who have ſuffered ſo much, beene ſo ſtrongly tempted, ſo greivouſly afflicted, ſo many wayes tryed and exerciſed. Thou oughteſt therefore to call to minde the heavy ſufferings of others, that thou mayeſt more eaſily beare thy little ones. And if they ſeeme not little to thee, take heede leaſt thy impatience be the cauſe thereof. But whither they be great or ſmall, endeavour to ſuffer them all patiently.

2 So

a Heb. 12. b Heb. 11.

2 So much better as thou diſpoſeſt thy ſelfe to ſuffer, ſo much more wiſely thou doeſt, and ſo much more doeſt thou merit. And thou wilt beare it more eaſily, if thy minde be diligently prepared and thou accuſtomed thereunto. Thou mayeſt not ſay, I cannot ſuffer theſe things from ſuch a man, and theſe kinde of things are not to be ſuffered by me: for he hath done me great wrong, and upbraided me with thoſe things I never thought of: but from another I will willingly ſuffer, and as I ſhall ſee cauſe of ſuffering. Such a thought is fooliſh, which conſiders not the vertue of patience, nor by whom it ſhall be crowned; but rather weighs the perſons and injuries offered.

3 He is not truly patient who will ſuffer but ſo much as he thinkes good, and from whom he plea-

ſes. He that is truly patient, mindes not by whom he is exerciſed; whither by his Prelate, or ſome of his equalls, or by his inferiours: whither by a good and holy man, or by a perverſe and unworthy perſon. But indifferently from all creatures, how much ſoever, or how often ſoever any adverſity happens unto him, he takes all thankfully as from the hand of God, and eſteemes it a great gaine; becauſe nothing, how little ſoever ſo it be ſuffered for God, can be without merit in his ſight.

4 Be thou therefore alwayes prepared for the fight, if thou wilt have the victory. [a] Without a combat thou canſt not attaine to the crowne of patience. If thou wilt not ſuffer, thou refuſeſt to be crowned. But if thou deſireſt to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure

a 2 Tim. 2.

dure patiently. Without labour there is no comming to reſt, nor without fight can the victory be obtained. Lord, make that poſſible to me by grace, which ſeemes impoſſible to me by nature. Thou knoweſt I can ſuffer little, and that I am quickly dejected when a ſmall adverſity ariſes. Let all exerciſe of tribulation and adverſity be made amiable and deſiderable to me for thy names ſake: for to ſuffer, and be vexed for thee, is very healthfull to my ſoule.

CHAP. XX.

Of the confeſſion of our infirmity, and the miſeries of this life.

1 I Will confeſſe againſt me my injuſtice: I will confeſſe unto thee, ô Lord, my infirmity. It is oftentimes a ſmall matter that dejects and greives me. [a] I purpoſe to

a Pſal. 31.

doe couragiouſly; but when a ſmall temptation comes, it brings me to great ſtreights. It is ſometimes a very triffle from whence great temptation does proceede. And whileſt I thinke my ſelfe ſomewhat ſafe, and doe not feele it, I finde my ſelfe overcome ſometimes with a ſmall blaſt.

2 Behold therefore my humility and frailty every way knowne unto thee. [a] Have mercy on me, and deliver me out of the mire, that I ſtick not faſt therein. [b] Let me not for ever remaine dejected. This is that which often beates me backe, and confounds me in thy ſight, becauſe I am ſo ſubject to fall, and weake in reſiſting paſſions. And though I doe not altogether conſent, yet their aſſaults are troubleſome and greivous to me, and it is very teadious to live thus in dayly ſtrife.

a Pſal.24. b Pſal.68.

ſtrife. My infirmity is hereby made knowne unto me, ſince wicked fancies doe alwayes much more eaſily enter in upon me, then they can be caſt out againe.

3 O moſt mighty God of Iſrael, zealous lover of faithfull ſoules, I beſeech thee, regard the labour and ſorrowe of thy ſervant, and aſſiſt him in all whatſoever he undertakes. Strenghten me with heavenly force, leaſt the old man, miſerable fleſh, not yet ſubject to the ſpirit, prevaile and get the upper hand; againſt which we muſt fight as long as we breath in this miſerable life. Alas, what kinde of life is this, where tribulations and miſeries are never wanting? where all things are full of ſnares and enemies? For one tribulation or temptation going away, another comes; yea during the firſt conflict, many others come one upon another

and unexpected.

4 And how can a life be loved, that hath ſo many afflictions and is ſubject to ſo many calamities and miſeries? How is it called a life, that begets ſo many deaths and plagues? And yet it is loved, and many ſeeke to delight themſelves in it. The world is often blamed that it is deceitfull and vaine, and yet it is not eaſily forſaken, becauſe the concupiſcence of the fleſh gouvernes. Somethings drawe us to love it, and others to contemne it.[a] The concupiſcence of the fleſh, the concupiſcence of the eyes, and pride of life, doe drawe us to the love of the world; but the paines and miſeries that attend it, breed a hatred and loathing of it.

But alas, wicked pleaſure overcomes a minde given to the world; and ſuch a one eſteemes the pleaſing

a 1. Iohn 2.

ſing of her ſenſes a delight, becauſe ſhe hath neither ſeene nor taſted the ſweetneſſe of God, and the interiour delight of vertue. [a] But they who perfectly contemne the world, and endeavour to live to God under holy diſcipline, are not ignorant of the divine ſweetneſſe, that is promiſed to the true forſakers of the world; and diſcerne clearly how greivouſly the world erres, and how many wayes it is deceived.

a Iob 30.

CHAP. XXI.

That we are to reſt in God above all goods and gifts.

1 O My ſoule, above all things, and in all things, doe thou ever reſt in God; for he is the eternall reſt of the Saints. Grant me, ô moſt ſweete and loving Jeſus, to reſt in thee above all creatures, a-

boye

bove all health, and beauty; above all glory, and honour; above all power, and dignity; above all knowledge, and ſubtility; above all riches, and arts; above all joy, and gladneſſe; above all fame, and praiſe; above all ſweetneſſe, and comfort; above all hope, and promiſe; above all merit, and deſire; above all gifts, and rewards, that thou canſt give and impart; above all joy, and jubilation, that a humane minde can receive and feele. Laſtly above Angells, and Archangells; and above all the heavenly hoaſt; above all things viſible, and inviſible; and above all that thou art not, my God.

2 For thou, my Lord God, art good above all goods: thou alone moſt powerfull, thou alone moſt full and ſufficient, thou alone moſt ſweete and comfortable, thou alone moſt beautifull and loving, thou alone

alone moſt noble and glorious a-bove all things: in whom all good things together are, have beene, and ever ſhall be moſt perfectly. And therefore, whatſoever thou beſtoweſt on me beſides thy ſelfe, or revealeſt of thy ſelfe, or promiſeſt; whileſt thou art not ſeene, nor fully obtained, is too little, and unſufficient Becauſe indeede my heart cannot truly reſt, nor be fully contented, unleſſe it reſt in thee: and tranſcend all gifts and creatures whatſoever.

3 O my moſt beloved ſpouſe Chriſt Jeſus, the moſt pure lover, the gouvernour of all creatures! O who will give me wings of true liberty to fly, and reſt in thee? [a] O when ſhall it be fully granted me, to attend to my ſelfe and ſee, how ſweete thou art my Lord God! When ſhall I fully recollect my ſelfe

[a] Pſal. 45.

ſelfe in thee, that through thy love I may not feele my ſelfe; but thee alone above all ſenſe, and manner, in a manner not knowne to all! [a] But now I frequently mourne, and beare my infelicity with greife: becauſe many evills occurre in this vale of miſery, which doe often trouble, greive, and darken me; often hinder, and diſtract me; allure, and intangle me, that I may not have free acceſſe to thee, and enjoy thy ſweete embracements, alwayes ready for bleſſed ſpirits. Let my ſighes, and manifold deſolations on earth move thee.

4 O Jeſus, ſplendor of eternall glory, the comfort of a pilgrime ſoule: before thee my tongue is without voice, and my ſilence ſpeakes to thee. How long does my Lord delay to come? Let him come

a Deut. 13.

come to me his poore ſervant, and make me glad. Let him ſtretch forth his hand, and deliver me wretch from all anguiſh. Come, come; for without thee there will be no joyfull day, nor houre; becauſe thou art my joy: and without thee my table is empty. I am a wretched creature, and in a manner impriſoned, and loaded with fetters; untill thou comfort me with the ſight of thy preſence, and give me liberty, and ſhewe me a favourable countenance.

5 Let others ſeeke what they pleaſe inſtead of thee: but for me nothing does, or ſhall delight me, but thou my God, my hope, and everlaſting health. I will not hold my peace, nor ceaſe to pray, untill thy grace returne, and thou ſpeake to me interiourly: *Loe, I am here: behold, I come to thee; becauſe thou haſt called upon me; thy teares, and the*

the desire of thy soule, thy humiliation, and the contrition of thy heart have inclined, and brought me to thee. And I said: Lord I have called upon thee, and desired to enjoy thee, being ready to forsake all things for thee. For thou didst first stirre me up that I might seeke thee. Blessed be thou therefore ô Lord, who hast shewed this goodnesse to thy servant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6 What hath thy servant more to say before thee, but that he doe greatly humble himselfe in thy sight, alwayes mindfull of his owne iniquity, and baseneſſe? [a] For there is none like unto thee in all whatsoever is wonderfull, in heaven and earth. Thy wordes are good, thy judgements true, and by thy providence all things are governed. Praise therefore and glory be

a Psal. 85.

be unto thee, ô wisdome of the eternall Father: let my tongue, my soule, and all creatures together praise and blesse thee.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.

1[a] OPen, ô Lord, my heart in thy Lawe, and teach me to walke in thy commandements. Grant me to understand thy will, and to remember thy benefits, as well in generall, as in particular, with great reverence and diligent consideration: that hence forward I may be able worthily to give thee thanks. But I knowe and confesse, that I am not able to give thee due thanks, for the favours which thou bestowest upon me, even in the least moment I am lesse then the least of thy benefits: and

a Psal 118.

when I conſider the excellency of thy Majeſty, the greatneſſe thereof makes my ſpirit to faint.

2 All that we have in our ſoule and body, and whatſoever we poſſeſſe outwardly or inwardly, naturally or ſpiritually, are thy benefits, and doe praiſe thee as bountifull, pious, and good, from whom we have received all that is good. Although one hath received more, another leſſe, all notwithſtanding are thine, and without thee even the leaſt cannot be had. He that hath received greater, cannot glory of his owne deſert, nor extoll himſelfe above others, nor inſult over the leſſer: for he is greater and better that aſcribes leaſt unto himſelfe, and is more humble & devout in rendring thanks. And he that eſteemes himſelfe baſeſt of all men, & judges himſelfe moſt unworthy, is fitteſt to receive greater bleſſings.

3 And

3 And he that hath received fewer, ought not to be sorry nor beare it impatiently, nor envy them that are enriched with greater store, but attend rather unto thee, and cheifly praise thy goodnesse, for that thou bestowest thy gifts so bountifully, so freely, and so willingly without respect of persons All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised. Thou knowest what is fit to be given to every one: and why this man hath lesse, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine, who doest weigh in just measure the deserts of every one.

4 Wherefore my Lord God, I esteeme it as a great benefit not to have much, whereby outwardly and before men I might seeme worthy of praise and glory: so that he, who considers his owne poverty, and baseneſſe, ought not there-

fore tó conceive greife, or ſorrow, or to be therefore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, and to be glad: [a] for that thou, ô God, haſt choſen the poore and humble, and the deſpiſed of this world for thy ſelfe, and for thy familiar and domeſticall freinds. Witneſſes are thy Apoſtles thẽſelves, whom thou haſt appointed princes over all the earth. And yet they lived without complaint in the world, ſo humble and ſimple, meane to the eyes of men, without all malice and deceipt, [b] that they rejoyced to receive contumelies for thy name: and what the world abhorres, they imbraced with great affection.

5 Nothing therefore ought ſo to rejoyce him that loves thee, and acknowledges thy benefits, as the accompliſhment of thy will in himſelfe, and the pleaſure of thy eter-

a Pſal. 44. 1. Cor. 1. 2. Theſſ. 2. b Acts 7.

eternall appointment: wherewith he ought to be ſo contented and comforted, that he would as willingly be the leaſt, as any would wiſh to be the greateſt: and as peaceable and content in the laſt, as in the firſt place: and as willingly to be deſpiſed and contemned, and to be of no eſteeme or account, as to be preferred in honour before all things: and to comfort him more, and pleaſe him better, then all the benefits which he hath received, or can deſire.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of foure things that bring much peace.

1 SOnne, now I will teach thee the way of peace, and true liberty. Doe Lord, I beſeech thee, as thou ſayeſt; for I ſhall be very glad to heare it. [a] Endeavour my Sonne

a Math. 26. Iohn 5. 6.

to doe rather the will of another, then thine owne. [a] Ever chooſe rather to have leſſe then more. Alwayes ſeeke the loweſt place, and to be inferiour to every one. [b] Wiſh alwayes, and pray, that the will of God may be fulfilled in thee. Behold ſuch a man enters into the limits of peace and moſt quiet reſt.

2 [c] Lord, this thy ſhort ſpeech cõtaines much perfection. It is little in words, but full in ſenſe, and aboundant in fruit. For if it could exactly be kept by me, then ſhould I not ſo eaſily be troubled. For as often as I feele my ſelfe unquiet, and afflicted, I finde that I have ſtrayed from this doctrine. But thou that canſt all things, and ever loveſt the good and profit of my ſoule, increaſe in me thy grace, that I may fulfill thy words, and perfect mine owne health.

a 1. Cor. 10. b Math. 6. c Math. 5.

A Prayer againſt evill thoughts.

3 [a] My Lord God, be not farre from me: my God have regard to helpe me, for ſundry thoughts have riſen up againſt me, and great feares afflicting my ſoule. How ſhall I paſſe through them without hurt? How ſhall I breake them? [b] I, ſaith he, will goe before thee, and will humble the glorious of the earth. I will open the doores of the priſon, and reveale unto thee the hidden ſecrets. Doe Lord as thou ſayeſt, and let all evill thoughts fly from before thy face. This is my hope, and my onely comfort, to fly unto thee in all tribulation, to truſt in thee, to call upon thee from my heart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

a Pſal. 70. b Iſa. 45.

A Prayer for the enlightening of the minde.

4 Enlighten me good Jeſu, with the clearneſſe of inward light, and expell all darkneſſe of my heart. Repreſſe the many wandring thoughts, and beate downe the fury of the temptations, which violently aſſault me. Fight ſtrongly for me, and vanquiſh the evill beaſts, that is the alluring concupiſcences, that peace may be made in thy vertue, and aboundance of thy praiſe ſound in thy holy Court, which is a pure conſcience. [a] Command the winds and tempeaſts: ſay unto the ſea: Be ſtill: and to the north-wind: Blowe not; and a great calme ſhall enſue.

5 [b] Send forth thy light, and thy truth, that they may ſhine upon the earth; for I am empty and unprofi-

a Matth. 8. b Pſal. 42.

profitable earth, untill thou imparteſt thy light unto me. Poure out thy grace from above; waſh my heart with heavenly dew; give water of devotion, to waſh the face of the earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift up my mind, overcharged with the weight of ſinne: drawe up my whole deſire to heavenly treaſures, that having taſted the ſweetneſſe of celeſtiall happineſſe, it may loath to thinke of earthly vanities.

6 Take me violently to thee, and deliver me from all unſtable comfort of creatures: for no created thing can fully quiet and ſatisfie my deſire. Joyne me unto thee with an unſpeakable band of love: for thou onely filleſt the minde of him that loves thee, and without thee all things are diſtaſtfull.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of flying curious inquiry of the life of others.

1 SOnne,[a] be not curious: trouble not thy ſelfe with idle cares. What is this or that to thee? doe thou followe me. [b] For what is it to thee, whether that man be ſuch or no, or whether this man doe, or ſpeake this or that? Thou ſhalt not neede to anſwer for others, but ſhalt give account of thy ſelfe. Why therefore doeſt thou trouble thy ſelfe. Behold I know every one what he is, and doe ſee all things that are under the ſunne: and doe underſtād how it is with every one, what he thinkes, what he would, and at what his intention aymes. All things therefore are to be committed unto me: but doe thou keepe thy ſelfe in good peace, and ſuffer

[a] Eccl. 3. 1. Tim. 5. [b] Iohn 21.

fer the unquiet to doe as they will. Whatſoever they ſhall have done, or ſaid, ſhall fall upon themſelves, for they cannot deceive me.

2 Deſire not too great fame in this world, nor to be knowne to many, nor to have the private love of men: for theſe things breed diſtractions, and cauſe great darkneſſe of heart. I would willingly utter my words, and reveale my ſecrets unto thee, if thou didſt diligently obſerve my comming: and dideſt open the doore of thy heart unto me. Be carefull and watch in prayer, and humble thy ſelfe in all things.

CHAP. XXV.

Wherein does the firme peace of the heart, and true profit conſiſt.

1 SOnne, I have ſaid: [a] Peace I leave to you, my peace I give to you:

a Iohn 14.

you: not as the world giveth, doe I give to you. All doe desire peace, but all care not for those things that appertaine unto true peace. My peace is with the humble, and meeke of heart. Thy peace shall be in much patience. If thou wilt heare me and followe my voyce, thou mayest enjoy much peace. What then shall I doe? In every thing attend unto thy selfe what thou doest, and what thou sayest: and direct thy whole intention unto this, that thou mayest please me alone, and desire or seeke nothing out of me. Of the sayings and doings of others, judge nothing rashly; neither doe thou intangle thy selfe with things not committed unto thee: and doing thus, it may be thou shalt be little or seldome troubled.

2 But never to feele any trouble at all, nor to suffer any greife of heart

heart or body, is not the ſtate of this life, but of everlaſting reſt. Thinke not therefore that thou haſt found true peace, if thou feeleſt no ſorrowe, nor that then all is well, if thou have no adverſary: nor that it is perfect, if all things be done according to thy deſire. Neither doe thou then eſteeme highly of thy ſelfe, or imagine thy ſelfe to be eſpecially beloved, if thou be in great devotion, and ſweetneſſe: for in theſe things a true lover of vertue is not tryed; neither doth the profit and perfection of man conſiſt in having them.

3 Wherein then Lord? In offering thy ſelfe from the very bottome of thy heart, upon the divine ſervice, not ſeeking thine owne intereſt or commodity, neither in great nor little, neither in time nor eternity: ſo that with equall countenance, thou mayeſt perſiſt in thankſgiving,

ving, both in prosperity and in adversity, weighing all things with an equall balance. If thou be of such courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawne from thee, thou prepare thy heart to suffer greater matters, and not justifie thy selfe, as though thou oughtest not to suffer these, and so great afflictions, but justifie me in whatsoever I appoint, and praise my holy name; then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace: and thou shalt have undoubted hope to see my face againe with great joy. And if thou attaine to the full contempt of thy selfe; then shalt thou enjoy as great aboundance of peace, as thy banishment may permit.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the excellency of a free minde, which humble prayer better deserves then reading.

1 LOrd, it is the worke of a perfect man, never to slacke his minde from the attentive thought of heavenly things, and as it were to passe without care through many cares: not faintingly, but with a certaine priviledge of a free minde, adhering by inordinate affection to no creature.

2 I beseech thee most mercifull God, preserve me from the cares of this life, least I should be too much intangled thereby: and from the many necessities of the body, least I should be enthralled by pleasure from all hinderances of the soule, least broken with troubles I should be dejected and dismayed. I meane not from those things

things that all worldly vanity ſo greatly deſires: but from thoſe miſeries, that as puniſhments, doe weigh downe and hinder the ſoule of thy ſervant, with the generall curſe of mortality, [a] that it cannot enter into liberty of ſpirit, as often as it would.

3 O my God, the unſpeakable ſweetneſſe, make bitter unto me all carnall comfort, which may draw me away from the love of everla-ſting happineſſe, and wickedly allure me to it ſelfe with the force of a certaine preſent delight. Let not fleſh and bloud overcome me ô Lord Let not the world and the ſhort glory thereof deceive me. Let not the devill and his ſubtile fraude ſupplant me. [b] Give me force to reſiſt, patience to ſuffer, and conſtancy to perſever. Give me inſtead of all the comforts of the world

a Rom 7. b Rom. 2.

world the moſt ſweete unction of thy ſpirit; and in lieu of carnall love, powre into my ſoule the love of thy name.

4 Behold, meate, drinke, cloathes, and other neceſſaries for the maintenance of the body, are burdenſome unto a fervent ſpirit. Grant me to affect ſuch nouriſhments in due meaſure, and not to be intangled with an over-great deſire of them. It is not lawfull to renounce them wholy, for that nature is to be maintained: but to deſire ſuperfluities, and thoſe things that doe rather delight, then ſuſtaine, the holy Law forbiddes: for otherwiſe the fleſh would rebell againſt the ſpirit. Herein I beſeech thee, let thy hand gouverne me, and teach me, that I may not exceede.

Chap. XXVII.

The private love most hinders from the chiefest good.

1 SOnne, thou oughtest to give all for all, and to retaine nothing of thy selfe. Knowe that the love of thy selfe does hurt thee more, then any thing in the world. According to the love, and affection thou beareſt them, ſo does every thing cleave unto thee more or leſſe. [a] If thy love be pure, ſimple, and well ordered, thou ſhalt be free from bondage. Covet not that which thou mayeſt not have. Be not willing to have that, which may hinder thee and deprive thee of inward liberty. It is a wonderfull thing that thou committeſt not thy ſelfe wholy unto me, from the bottome of thy heart, with all things, that thou canſt deſire or have.

2 Why

a Math. 6.

2 Why doest thou consume thy selfe with vaine greife? Why tyrest thou thy minde with needlesse cares? [b] Resigne thy selfe to me, and thou shalt feele no losse at all. If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be here or there, to enjoy thine owne commodity and pleasure, thou shalt never be in quiet, nor free from trouble of minde; for in every thing somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will crosse thee.

3 Not every externall thing therefore attained, and heaped together helpes thee: but it rather availes, if thou despise it, and doest route it out from thy heart, which thou must not understand onely of thy revenues and wealth, but of the desire of honour also, and vaine praise; all which doe passe away with this fading world. The place

[b] Exod. 3.

availes little, if the ſpirit of fervour be wanting: neither ſhall that peace which is ſought abroad long continue, if the ſtate of thy heart be deſtitute of a true foundation: that is, unleſſe thou perſiſt in me, thou mayeſt change, but not better thy ſelfe. For when occaſion does happen, thou ſhalt finde that which thou ſoughteſt to flye, and perhaps more.

A Prayer for cleanſing the heart, and obtaining of heavenly wiſdome.

4 [a] Confirme me Lord with the grace of thy holy ſpirit. Give me force to ſtrengthen my inward man and to purge my heart from all unprofitable care and greife, not to be [b] drawne away with ſundry deſires of any thing either little or great, but to conſider all things how they are tranſitory, and doe quickly

[a] Pſal. 50. [b] Matth. 6.

quickly fade, and that my selfe doe also passe away together with them: [a] for nothing is permanent under the sunne, where all things are vanity, and affliction of minde. O how wise is he that so considers them!

5 [b] Grant me Lord heavenly wisdome, that I may learne above all things to seeke and finde thee, above all things to delight in thee, and to love thee: and to thinke of all created things as they are, according to the disposition of thy wisdome. [c] Grant me prudently to avoyde him, that flatters me, and to suffer patiently him that contradicts me. It is great wisdome not to be moved with every blast of wordes: nor to give eare to dangerous flattery: for so we shall goe on securely in the way which we have begun.

a Eccl.1. b Sap.9. c Ephes.4.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Against the tongue of slanderers.

1 SOnne, be not greived if some thinke evill of thee, and speake that which thou doest not willingly heare. [a] Thou oughtest to judge the worst of thy selfe, and to thinke no man weaker then thy selfe. If thou walke according to spirit, thou wilt not much esteeme of flying wordes. It is no small wisdome to be silent in time of evill, and inwardly to turne to me, and not to be troubled with the judgement of men.

2 Let not thy peace be in the tongues of men. For whether they judge well or evill, thou art nevertheless alwayes the same.[b] Where is true peace, and true glory? Is it not in me? And he that covets not to please men, nor feares to dis-

please

a Cor. 4. b Iohn 5.

pleaſe them, ſhall enjoy much peace. From inordinate love and vaine feare ariſes all diſquiet of heart, and diſtraction of the ſenſes.

CHAP. XXIX.

How we ought to call upon God, and bleſſe him when tribulation draweſ neare.

1 [a] BLeſſed (ô Lord) be thy name for ever: ſince it pleaſes thee that this temptation and tribulation ſhould fall upon me. I cannot fly it: but have neede to fly to thee, that thou mayeſt helpe me, and turne it to my good. Lord I am now afflicted, and it is not well with me; I am much troubled with this preſent greife. [b] And now, beloved Father, what ſhall I ſay? I am taken in narrowe ſtraits, ſave me in this houre: yea therefore I am fallen in this houre, that thou may-

a Iob 1. Pſal. 112. b Matth. 26.

eſt be glorified, when I ſhall be greatly humbled, and by thee delivered. [a] Let it pleaſe thee Lord to deliver me: for poore wretch that I am, what can I doe, and whither ſhall I goe without thee? Grant patience Lord, even this time alſo. Helpe me my God, and then I will not feare how much ſoever I be oppreſſed.

2 And now in this, what ſhall I ſay? [b] Lord, thy will be done. I have well deſerved to be afflicted and greived. Surely I ought to beare it: and I would to God I might beare it with patience, untill the tempeſt be paſſed over, and it become calme. But thy omnipotent hand is able to take this temptation from me, and to aſſwage the violence thereof, that I utterly ſinke not under it, as oftentimes heretofore thou haſt done unto me, my

a Pſal 39. b Matth. 6.

my Lord, my mercy. And how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easy is this change of thy mighty hand to thee.

a Psal. 76.

CHAP. XXX.

Of craving the divine aide, and confidence of recovering grace.

1 SOnne, a I am thy Lord, who doe use to give comfort in the day of tribulation. Come unto me when it is not well with thee. This is that which most of all hinders heavenly consolation, that thou art slowe in turning thy selfe unto prayer. For before thou doest earnestly commend thy selfe to me, thou seekest many comforts and delights thy selfe in outward things. And hence it proceeds

Q 5 tha

a Matth. 1.

that all does little profit thee, untill thou consider that I am he, that deliver those that trust in me: and that out of me there is neither powerfull helpe, nor profitable counsell, nor remedy that can continue. But now thou having recovered breath after the tempest, gather strength againe in the light of my mercies: for I am at hand sayes our Lord, to repaire all, not onely entirely, but also aboundantly.

2 Is there any thing hard to me? or am I like unto him that promises and performes not? [a] Where is thy faith? Be firme and constant. Take courage and be patient, comfort will be given thee in due time. Attend me, expect, I will come and cure thee. It is a temptation that vexes thee: and a vaine feare that affrightes thee. [b] What

else

a Math. 23. b Math. 6.

elſe does the care for future incertainties bring thee, but ſorrowe upon ſorrowe? Sufficient for the day is the evill thereof. It is a vaine and unprofitable thing to be greived, or to rejoyce for future things, that perhaps will never happen

3. But it is incident to man, to be deluded with ſuch imaginations: and a ſigne of little courage to be ſo eaſily drawne away by the ſuggeſtion of the enemy For he cares not ſo he delude and deceive thee, whether it be true or falſe which he propoſes: whether he overthrowe thee with the love of preſent, or the feare of future things. Let not therefore thy heart be troubled, neither doe thou feare. Believe in me and put thy truſt in my mercy. When thou thinkeſt thy ſelfe furthereſt of from me, often-

a Pſal. 60.

oftentimes I am neareſt unto thee. When thou judgeſt that almoſt all is loſt, then oftentimes greateſt gaine of merit is at hand. All is no loſt when any thing falls out contrary unto thee. Thou muſt not judge according to that which thou feeleſt for the preſent: nor give thy ſelfe over to any greife from whence ſoever it comes, as though all hope of delivery were quite gone.

4 Thinke not thy ſelfe wholy left, although for a time I have ſent thee ſome tribulation, or withdrawne thy deſired comfort: for this is the way to the Kingdome of heaven. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, and the reſt of my ſervants, that ye be exerciſed with many adverſities, then that ye ſhould have all things according to your deſires. I knowe the ſecret thoughts of thy heart,

and

and that it is very expedient for thy ſoules health, that thou be left ſometimes without taſte and feeling of ſpirituall ſweetneſſe, leaſt perhaps thou ſhouldeſt be puffed up with good ſucceſſe, and ſhouldeſt pleaſe thy ſelfe in that which thou art not. [a] That which I have given, I can take away, and reſtore it againe when I pleaſe.

5 When I give it, it is mine: when I withdrawe it, I take not any thing that is thine: for mine is every good, and every perfect gift. If I ſend thee affliction, or any croſſe whatſoever, repine not, nor be not diſmayed I can quickly lift thee up againe, and turne all thy ſorrowe into joy. Nevertheleſſe I am juſt, and greatly to be praiſed, when I doe all this unto thee.

6 If thou be wiſe, and conſider

a Iacob. 2.

der well thy caſe, thou wilt never yeild ſo cowardly to greiſe, for any adverſity that befalls thee, but rather rejoyce and give thanks: yea to account this thy onely joy, that afflicting thee with ſorrowes, I doe not ſpare thee. a As my Father hath loved me, I alſo love you, ſaid I unto my beloved Diſciples, whom certainly I ſent not to temporall joyes, but to great conflicts: not to honours, but to contempts: not to idleneſſe, but to labours: not to reſt, but to bring much fruit in patience. My ſonne, remember theſe wordes.

a Iohn 16.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the contempt of all creatures to finde our Creatour.

1 LOrd, I ſtand yet in neede of great grace, if I muſt goe ſo farre as that no man or creature can

can hinder me. For as long as any thing holdes me, I cannot flye freely unto thee. He desires to flye with great liberty that said,[a] Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will flye and rest? What thing more quiet then a simple eye? And what more free, then he that desires nothing upon earth? Man ought therefore to ascend above all creatures, and perfectly to forsake himselfe, and to remaine in excesse of minde: and consider that thou, who art the maker of all things, hast nothing amongst creatures like unto thee. And unlesse a man be free from the affection of all creatures, he cannot with freedome of minde attend unto divine things. And for this case there are so fewe contemplative men to be found; for that fewe can wholy sequester themselves from fading creatures.

2 Much

a Psal. 54.

2 Much grace is neceſſary to life up a ſoule, and to carry it above it ſelfe. And unleſſe a man be lifted up in ſpirit, and delivered from all creatures, and wholy united unto God: whatſoever he knowes, and whatſoever he hath, is of little accompt. Long ſhall he be little, and lye in earthly baſeneſſe, that eſteemes any thing great, but the onely unmeaſurable and eternall good. For whatſoever is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing. There is great difference betweene the wiſdome of a ſpirituall and devout perſon, and the knowledge of a learned and ſtudious Clarke. Farre more noble is that learning which flowes from above, from the divine influence, then that which is painfully gotten by the wit of man.

3 There are many that deſire contemplation, but they endeavour not

not to exercise those things that are required thereunto. It is a great hinderance that we rest in signes and sensible things, and have little true mortification. I knowe not what it is, nor by what spirit we are led, nor what we pretend, we that seeme to be called spirituall, that we take so much paines, and so great care for transitory and base things, and scarce or seldome thinke of our owne inward profit, with full recollection of our senses.

4 Alas, presently after a sleight recollection, we breake forth: and weigh not our workes with diligent examination. We minde not where our affections lye: nor bewaile the impurity and many faults that are in all our actions. [a] For all flesh had corrupted her way, and therefore did that generall floud ensue. Sith our inward affection

a Gen. 6. 7.

then is much corrupted, it muſt needes be that our action proceeding thereof, be corrupted, as a ſigne of the want of inward vigour. From a pure heart proceeds the fruit of good life.

5 We aske how much one hath done: but how vertuous his actions are, is not ſo diligently conſidered. We inquire whether he be ſtrong, rich, beautifull, handſome, a good writer, a good ſinger, or a good labourer: but how poore he is in ſpirit, how patient, and meeke, how devout and ſpirituall, is ſeldome ſpoken of. Nature reſpects outward things, grace turns her ſelfe to the inward vertues. That is often deceived: this hath her truſt in God, to the end ſhe be not deceived.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of the denial of our selves, and forsaking all our affections.

1 SOnne, thou canst not possesse perfect liberty, unlesse thou wholy deny thy selfe. All such as be lovers of themselves are bound in fetters, they are coveteous, curious, wanderers, seekers of ease, and not of those things that appertaine to Jesus Christ; but oftentimes devising, and framing that which will not continue. For all shall perish that proceeds not from God Keepe this short and compleat word. Forsake all, and thou shalt finde all. Leave thy inordinate desires, and thou shalt finde rest. Consider this well: and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all.

2 Lord, this is not one dayes

a Math. 16. 19.

worke, nor childrens ſport: yea in this ſhort ſentence all the perfecti. on of religious perſons is inclu. ded. Sonne, thou muſt not goe backe, nor ſtraitwayes be dejected, when thou heareſt the way of the perfect; but rather be ſtirred up to more worthy and noble attempts, or at leaſt to conceive an earneſt deſire thereof. I would it were ſo well with thee, and thou wert come ſo farre, that thou wert no longer a lover of thy ſelfe, but didſt ſtand meerely at my beck, and at his whom I have appointed a father over thee: then thou ſhouldſt exceedingly pleaſe me, and all thy life would paſſe away in joy and peace. Thou haſt yet many things to forſake, which unleſſe thou wholy reſigne over unto me, thou ſha't not attaine to that which thou deſireſt. [a] I counſell thee to buy of me

a Apoc. 3.

me purified gold, that thou mayest become rich, that is heavenly wisdome, which treads under foot all base and earthly things. Set little by the wisdome of this world, and esteeme not of the contentment of men, nor thine owne fancies.

3 I said, that thou shouldest buy the meane and base things with the precious, and those that were with men of great esteeme. For true heavenly wisdome seemes very base, and of small account, and is scarce thought of by men: for that esteemes not highly of it selfe, nor seekes to be magnified upon earth, which may praise from the teeth outward, but in their life they are farre from it: [a] yet is it the precious pearle which is hidden from many.

a Math. 17.

Chap. XXXIII.

Of inconſtancy of heart, & of directing our finall intentions unto God.

1 SOnne, a truſt not to thy affection: that which now is, will quickly change into another. As long as thou liveſt thou art ſubject to mutability, even againſt thy will: ſo that now thou art merry, now ſad, now quiet, now troubled, now devout, now diſtracted, now diligent, now idle, now heavy, now light. But he that is wiſe, and well inſtructed in ſpirit, remaines alwayes one in the middeſt of theſe changes, not heeding what he ſeekes in himſelfe, or which way the winde of mutability blowes: but that the whole intention of his minde, may tend as it ought, to the moſt perfect and beſt end. For ſo he may continue one, and the ſelfe

a Iob 14:

selfe same, without any change in the midst of so many sundry chances, directing alwayes the sincere eye of his intention unto me.

2 [a]And how much purer the eye of the intention is, so much the more constantly does he passe through the variety of many contrary waves. But in many things the eye of a sincere intention waxes blinde, for it quickly lookes upon some delight, some object that occurres. And it is rare to finde one that is wholy free from al blemish of seeking himselfe. So the Jewes in times past came into [b]Bethania to Martha and Mary, not for Jesus alone, but to see Lazarus also. [c]The eye of our intention therefore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere and pure, and to be directed unto me, neglecting the multitude and variety of earthly objects.

a Matth 6. b Iohn 11. c Matth.6.

Chap. XXXIV.

That God is ſweet above all things, and in all things to him that loves.

1 BEhold my God, and all things! What would I have more, and what can I deſire more happy? O ſweet and comfortable word! but to him that loves the word, not the world, nor thoſe things that are in the world. My God, and all things! Enough is ſaid to him that underſtandes, and it is pleaſant to him that loves, to repeat it often. For when thou art preſent, all things doe yeild delight, but when thou art abſent, all becomes irkſome. Thou giveſt quiet of heart and much peace, and pleaſant joy. Thou makeſt men thinke well of all, and praiſe thee in all things: neither can any thing pleaſe us long without thee: but if it be pleaſant and delightſome, thy grace muſt

muſt be preſent, and it muſt be ſeaſoned with the ſweetneſſe of thy wiſdome.

2 What can be diſtaſtfull unto him, to whom thou art pleaſing? [a]And whom thou delighteſt not, what can be pleaſant? But the wiſe of the world, and that have their contentment in ſenſuall things, cannot attaine to thy wiſdome, for in the world is much vanity, and in the fleſh is death. [b] But they that followe thee by the contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the fleſh, are proved to be truly wiſe; for they are changed from vanity to truth, from fleſh to ſpirit. To theſe God is ſweet, and what good ſoever is found in creatures, they wholy referre unto the praiſe of their maker. Notwithſtanding great, yea very great is the difference betweene the ſweet-

a Rom. 8. b 1. Iohn 2.

neſſe of the Creatour, and of the creature, of eternity and of time, of uncreated and created light.

3 O everlaſting light, ſurpaſſing all created lights, caſt forth the beames of thy brightneſſe from above, and peirce the moſt inward corners of my heart: purifie, rejoyce, clarifie and quicken my ſpirit with all the powers thereof, that I may cleave unto thee with exces of unſpeakable joy. O when will that bleſſed and deſired houre come, that I may be filled with thy preſence, and thou mayeſt be unto me all, in all things: as long as this is not granted me, I ſhall not have full nor perfect joy. Alas! my old man yet lives in me, he is not wholy crucified, he is not perfectly dead. He does yet covet ſtrongly againſt the ſpirit, and moves civill warres, and ſuffers not the

a Rom. 7.

the kingdome of my ſoule to be in peace.

4 [a] But thou that ruleſt the powers of the ſea, and aſſwageſt the motions of the waves, riſe and helpe me: diſſipate the people that deſire warre, and deſtroy them in thy might, and let thy hand be glorified: for there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

a Pſal. 68. 33 89 90.

CHAP. XXXV.

That there is no ſecurity from temptation in this life.

1 SOnne, there is no ſecurity in this life: [a] as long as thou liveſt thou ſhalt alwayes have neede of ſpirituall armour. Thou liveſt among enemies, and art aſſaulted on all ſides: if therefore thou defendeſt not thy ſelfe on every ſide with the ſhielde of patience, thou canſt

a Job 7. 1. Cor. 6.

canſt not be long unwounded. Moreover if thou fixe not thy heart on me with a ſincere will to ſuffer all things for me, thou canſt not ſuſtaine the heat of this battaile, nor get that victorious crowne which they have that are in glory. Thou oughteſt therefore manfully to goe through all, and to uſe a ſtrong hand againſt whatſoever withſtands thee. For to him that overcomes is given Manna, and to the negligent is left much woe.

2. If thou ſeekeſt reſt in this world, how wilt thou then attaine to everlaſting reſt? Give not thy ſelfe to much eaſe, but to much patience. Seeke true peace, not in earth, but in heaven; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughteſt for the love of God willingly to undergoe labours, to endure greifs, temptations, vexations, anxieties,

ieties, neceſſities, infirmities, injures, detractions, reprehenſions, humiliations, confuſions, corrections, and contempts: theſe helpe to the attaining of vertue: theſe trye a Novice of Chriſt: theſe make a heavenly crowne. I will give an everlaſting reward for a ſhort labour, and infinite glory for tranſitory confuſion.

3 Thinkeſt thou, that thou ſhalt alwayes have ſpirituall conſolations at will. My Saints had not ſo, but many afflictions, and ſundry temptations, and many diſcomforts: all which they endured patiently, and truſted rather in God, then in themſelves: [a] knowing that the ſufferings of his time are not condigne to the deſerving of future glory. Wilt thou have that ſtraightwayes, which many after teares, & great labours have hardly obtai-

a Rom. 8.

obtained? [a] Expect the comming of thy Lord, doe manfully, be of good courage: feare not, doe not flye, but offer both body and ſoule for the glory of God I will reward thee in the moſt plentifull manner, and I will be with thee in all thy tribulations.

a Pſal 26.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Againſt the vaine judgements of men.

1 SOnne, fixe thy heart ſtedfaſtly on God, and feare not the judgements of men, when thy conſcience gives teſtimony of thy juſtice and innocency. It is a good and a happy thing to ſuffer in that ſort; neither will it be burdenſome to an humble minde, nor to him that truſts rather in God, then in himſelfe. The moſt part of men are given to talke much, and therefore little care is to be had of

their

their wordes: neither is it possible to satisfie all. [a] Though the Apostle endeavour to please all in our Lord, and made himselfe all unto all, yet he little regarded that he was judged by humane day.

2 He did for the edification and health of others, as much as he could, and lay in him: yet could he not hinder, but that he was sometimes judged, and despised by others. Therefore he committed all to God, who knew all, and defended himselfe with patience, and humility against evill tongues, and such as thought vanities and lyes, and spake what listed. [b] Yet sometimes notwitstanding he answered, least the weake might have received scandall by his silence

3 Who art thou that feareſt a mortall man? to day he is, and to morrow

[a] 1. Cor. 9. 2. Cor. 4. Col. 2. [b] Acts 16. Phil. 1.

row he is not ſeene. [a] Feare God and the terrour of men ſhall not trouble thee. What harme can the wordes or injuries of any doe thee? he rather hurtes himſelfe then thee: neither can he avoyde the judgements of God be he what he will. [b] Have thou God before thine eyes, and contend not with complaining wordes. And if for the preſent thou ſeemeſt to be troaden downe, and to ſuffer ſhame and confuſion, without deſert, doe not repine, neither doe thou leſſen thy crowne by thy impatience; [c] but rather lift up thine eyes to me in heaven, I am able to deliver thee from all ſhame and wrong, and to repaye every one according to their workes.

a Mar. 2. b Rom. 2. 1. Cor. 11. c Hebr. 12.

CHAP.

Chap. XXXVII.

Of a full and pure resignation of our selves for the obtaining freedome of heart.

1 SOnne, leave thy selfe, and thou shalt finde me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy selfe, and thou shalt ever gaine. [a]For greater grace shall alwayes be given thee, when thou doest perfectly resigne thy selfe, and not turne backe to take thy selfe againe. Lord, how often shall I resigne my selfe? and wherein shall I forsake my selfe? Alwayes, and in every thing, as well in little as in great. I doe except nothing, but doe require that thou be as is were naked and voyde of all things. Otherwise, how canst thou be perfectly mine, and I thine, unlesse both within and without thou be from all selfe-will?

a Matth. 16.

And how much the ſooner thou doeſt this, ſo much the better thou finde thy ſelfe; and how much the more fully and ſincerely thou doeſt it, ſo much the more ſhalt thou pleaſe me, and ſo much the more ſhalt thou gaine.

2 Some there are that reſigne themſelves, but with ſome exception. For they put not their whole truſt in God, and therefore doe labour to provide for themſelves. Some alſo at the firſt doe offer all, but afterwards being aſſailed with temptations, doe returne againe to that which they had left, and therefore they goe not forwards in the way of vertue. Theſe ſhall not attaine to the true liberty of a pure heart, nor to the grace of my divine familiarity, unleſſe they firſt make an entire reſignation, and offer themſelves a dayly ſacrifice unto me. For without this can never

be

be obtained the union with me, wherewith my Saints enjoy me.

3 I have often ſaid unto thee, and now againe I ſay the ſame: Forſake thy ſelfe, reſigne thy ſelfe, and thou ſhalt enjoy internall peace. Give all for all, ſeeke nothing, require nothing, repoſe thy ſelfe purely and with a full confidence in me, and I will give my ſelfe unto thee, and darkneſſe ſhall not cover thee. Let this be thy whole endeavour, let this be thy prayer, let this be thy deſire, that caſting of all propriety, thou mayeſt all naked followe thy naked Saviour Jeſus: and dying to thy ſelfe, mayeſt live eternally to me. Then ſhall vaine fancies, evill perturbations, and all ſuperfluous cares flye away; then ſhall immoderate feare leave thee, and inordinate love ſhall dye.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Of good gouvernement in outward things, and of recourse to God in dangers.

1 SOnne, thou oughtest with all diligence to procure, that in every place and action, or externall businesse, thou be inwardly free, and master of thy selfe, and that all things be under thy disposition, and thou not subject to them; that thou mayst be Lord and master of thy actions, not a servant or a hireling, but rather a freeman, and a true Hebrew, belonging to the lot and freedome of the sonnes of God, who put the things that are present under their feete, and place their thoughts on that which is eternall; who looke on transitory things with the left eye, and with the right doe behold the things of heaven: who suffer not to themselves

ſelves to be drawne to cleave unto them, but rather diſpoſe and uſe them, as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the Creatour of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2 If thou remaine firme and ſtedfaſt in all events, and doeſt not weigh by the outward apparence, nor with a carnall eye, the things which thou ſeeſt and heareſt: but preſently in every occaſion doeſt enter with [a] Moyſes into the Tabernacle to aske counſell of our Lord, thou ſhalt ſometimes heare the divine and celeſtiall oracle, and ſhalt returne inſtructed of many things both preſent and to come. [b] Moyſes had alwayes recourſe to the Tabernacle for the deciding of all doubts, and obſcure queſtions, and fled to the helpe of prayer, for the remedy of the iniquity and

a Exod. 33. b Num. 9.

dangers of men. So oughteſt thou in like manner to flye to the cloſet of thy heart, earneſtly craving the divine favour. For the Scripture teſtifies, [a] that therefore was Joſue and the children of Iſrael deceived by the Gabaonites, becauſe they conſulted not firſt with God, but giving too lightly credit to faire wordes, were deluded with counterfait piety.

a Num 9.

CHAP. XXXIX.

That a man be not over earneſt in his affaires.

1 SOnne, alwayes commit thy cauſe to me, I will diſpoſe well of it in due time, expect my ordinance, and thou ſhalt finde it will be for thy good. Lord, I doe moſt willingly commit all unto thee, for my care can profit little. O that I cleaved not too much to future events,

vents, but offered my selfe with all readinesse of minde to thy divine pleasure!

2 Sonne, oftentimes a man does earnestly labour for that which he desires, and when he hath gotten it, he begimmes to be of another minde, and not to esteeme so much of it, as before he did: for mans affections doe not long continue fixed on one thing, but doe passe from one to another. It is therefore a matter, not of least moment, to forsake our selves even in the least things.

3 The true spirituall profit of man, consists in denying and forsaking of himselfe; [a] and he that is resigned, lives in great freedome and security. But the ancient enemy, who alwayes labours to withstand the servants of God, omits at no time his wonted temptations,

a 2. Pet. 5.

but day and night lyes ſtill in waite, to caſt the unwary, if he can, into the ſnare of deceipt. Watch therefore and pray, ſayes our Lord, that you enter not into temptation.

CHAP. XL.

That man hath no good of himſelfe, nor any thing whereof he can glory.

1[a] LOrd, what is man, that thou art mindfull of him, or the ſonne of man, that thou vouchſafeſt to viſit him? What hath man deſerved that thou ſhouldeſt give him thy grace? Lord, what cauſe have I to complaine, if thou forſake me? or if thou doeſt not that which I deſire, what can I juſtly ſay againſt it? Surely, this I may truly thinke and ſay: Lord, I am nothing, I can doe nothing, I have nothing that is good of my ſelfe: but in all things I doe faile, and am defecti-

ve,

a Pſal. 8.

ſe, and doe ever tende to nothing: and unleſſe thou helpe me, and doeſt interiourly inſtruct me, I become cold, and am diſſolved.

2 [a]But thou, ô Lord, art alwayes the ſame, and endureſt for ever, alwayes good, juſt, and holy, doing all things well, juſtly, and holily, and diſpoſing all things with wiſdome. But I that am more inclined to fall, then to goe forwards, doe never continue in one ſtate: for ſeven different times are changed over me. Yet does it ſoone turne to the better, when it ſo pleaſes thee, and when thou vouchſafeſt to ſtretch forth thy helping hand. For thou alone canſt helpe me without the favour of man, and ſo ſtrengthen me, that my countenance ſhall be no more changed, but my heart ſhall be converted, and reſt in thee alone.

S 5 3 Where-

[a] Pſal. 101.

3 Wherefore if I could once perfectly forsake all humane comfort, either for the love of devotion, or for mine owne necessity, which inforces me to seeke after thee (for none else can comfort me) then might I well hope in thy grace, and rejoyce in the gift of new consolation

4 Thankes be unto thee, from whence all proceeds, as often as it goes well with me: but I am meere vanity, and nothing before thee, an unconstant and weake man. Whereof then can I glory? Or why doe I desire to be esteemed what for nothing? And this is most vaine Truly, vaine glory is an evill plague, and very great vanity, because it drawes from true glory, and robbes the soule of heavenly grace. For whilest a man pleases himselfe, he displeases thee: whilest he gapes after the praise of men,

men, he is deprived of true vertue.

5 [a] But true glory, and holy exultation, and joy, is for a man to glory in thee, and not in himselfe, [b] to rejoyce in thy name and not in his owne vertue, nor to delight in any creature, but for thee. Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy worke, not mine: let thy holy name be for ever blessed, but to me let no part of mens praises be given. Thou art my glory, thou art the joy of my heart. In thee will I glory and rejoyce all the day; but for my selfe I will not joy, but in my infirmities.

6 [c] Let the Jewes seeke the glory, which one man gives to another: I will desire this, which is from God alone. For all humane glory, all temporall honour, all worldly highnesse, compared to thy eternall glory, is vanity and folly.

a Abac. 3. b Psal. 112. and 117. c Iohn 5.

folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, moſt bleſſed Trinity, to thee alone be all praiſe, honour, vertue, and glory for all eternity.

CHAP. XLI.

Of the contempt of all temporall honours.

1 SOnne, trouble not thy ſelfe, if thou ſeeſt others honoured and advanced, and thy ſelfe contemned and debaſed. Lift up thy heart unto me in heaven, and the contempt of men in earth will not greive thee. Lord, we are blinde, and quickly ſeduced with vanity. If I looke well into my ſelfe, I cannot ſay, that any creature hath done me wrong, and therefore I cannot juſtly complaine of thee.

2 But becauſe I have often and greivouſly ſinned againſt thee, all creatures doe juſtly take armes againſt me: for ſhame and contempt

is due unto me, but unto thee praise, honour, and glory. And unlesse I doe so prepare my selfe, that I be willing, and doe rejoyce to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, and to be esteemed nothing at all, I cannot obtaine internall strength and peace, nor be spiritually enlightned, nor wholy united unto thee.

CHAP. XLII.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

SOnne, if the peace thou hast with any, be grounded on the opinion which thou hast of him, or on the contentment thou receivest in his company, thou shalt ever be unconstant and subject to disquiet: but if thou have recourse unto the ever living and eternall Truth, a freind going from thee, or dying, shall not greive thee. The love of

thy

thy ſfreind ought to reſt in me, and for me is he to be beloved, whoſoever he be, whom thou thinkeſt well of, and is verily deare unto thee in this life No freindſhip can availe, or continue without me; neither is the love true and pure, which they have, whoſe hearts are not joyned together by me. Thou oughteſt to be ſo dead to ſuch affections of beloved freinds, that (foraſmuch as appertaines unto thee) thou ſhouldeſt wiſh to be without all company of men. Man approaches ſo much the nearer unto God, how much the further off he departs from all earthly comfort: ſo much the higher alſo he aſcends unto God, by how much the lower he deſcends into himſelfe, and how much the baſer he is in his owne conceipt.

2 But he that attributes any good unto himſelfe, hinders the coming of

of Gods grace unto him. [a] For the grace of the holy Ghost ever seekes an humble heart. If thou couldest perfectly annihilate thy selfe, and purge thy selfe of all created love, then should there flowe into thee great aboundance of my grace. When thou casteſt thy eyes on creatures, the sight of thy Creatour is taken from thee. Learne to overcome thy selfe in all things, for the love of thy Creatour, and then shalt thou be able to attaine to heavenly knowledge. How little soever it be, if it be inordinately loved and regarded, it defiles the soule, and hinders the enjoying of the cheifest good.

[a] 1. Pet.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vaine and secular knowledge.

1 SOnne, let not the faire speeches, and subtile sayings of men

men move thee. [a] For the kingdome of God consists not in words, but in vertue. Observe well the wordes which I speake: for they inflame the heart, and enlighten the minde, induce compunction, and bring sundry comforts. Doe thou never read to shewe thy selfe learned or wise: but labour to mortifie thy vices, for that will profit thee more, then the knowledge of many hard and difficult questions.

2 When thou shalt have read and known many things, thou oughtest ever to returne to one beginning. I am he, that teacheth man all knowledge, and doe give to little ones a more cleare understanding, then can be taught by man. He therefore, to whom I speake, shall quickly be wise, and shall profit much in spirit Woe be to them, that inquire many curious things

[a] 1. Cor 4

things of men, and doe little desire to knowe the way how to serve me. The time will come, when the Maister or Maisters shall appeare, Christ the Lord of Angels, to heare the lessons of all, that is, to examine the consciences of every one; and then [a] he will search Hierusalem with a candle, and the hidden things of darkenesse shall be laid open, and the inventions of tongues shall be silent.

3 I am he that in an instant doe raise up the humble minde, to understand more reasons of the everlasting truth, then can be gotten by ten yeares study in schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments. I am he that teaches to despise earthly things, to loath things present, to seeke

[a] Soph 1. 1. Cor. 4.

the everlasting, to delight in the things that are eternall, to flye honours, to suffer scandalls, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and above all things fervently to love me.

4 For one by loving me entirely, learned divine things, and spake wonders: he profited more in forsaking all things, then in studying subtilties. To some I speake ordinary things; to others, things more especiall: to some I appeare sweetly by signes and figures, but to some I reveale mysteries with much light. The voice of books is one, but it teaches not all men alike. For I am the internal teacher, I am the Truth, the searcher of the heart, the understander of thoughts, the setter forwards of good workes, distributing to every one according to my will.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIV.

Of not drawing outward things to our selves.

1 SOnne, in many things thou oughtest to be ignorant, and esteeme thy selfe as dead upon earth, and as one to whom the world is crucified. Thou must also passe over many things with a deafe [a] eare, and rather thinke of that, which appertaines to thy peace. It is more profitable to turne thine eyes from the sight of unpleasing things, and to leave unto every one his owne opinion, then to strive with contentious wordes. If thou standest well with God, and considerest his judgements, thou shalt the more easily yeilde to the will of others.

2 O Lord, to what an estate are we come! Behold, we bewaile a

a Galat. 6.

temporall loſſe, and for a little gaine we toyle and ſpare no labour, and the ſpirituall domage of our ſoule is forgotten, and hardly at length called to minde. That which little or nothing profites, is alwayes remembred, and that which is cheifly neceſſary, is negligently paſſed over, becauſe mans nature carryes him to externall things; and unleſſe he quickly returne unto himſelfe, he lyes drowned in them with delight.

Chap. XLV.

That credit is not to be given to all men: and how prone man is to offend in words.

1[a] Help me, Lord, in my tribution, for vaine is the defence of man. How often have I beene deceived, finding want of faith, where I thought it ſure? And how often

a Pſal. 59.

often have I found faith, where I leaſt expected it? It is vaine therefore to truſt in men: but the ſafety of the juſt, ô Lord, is in thee. Bleſſed be thou my God, in all things that befall us. We are weake and inconſtant, quickly deceived, and ſoone changed.

2 Who is he, that is able ſo warily to keepe himſelfe, that [a] he never fall into any deceipt or doubt? But he that truſts in thee, ô Lord, and ſeekes thee with a pure heart, does not eaſily fall: and if he falls into any tribulation, be he never ſo much inthralled, yet he ſhall quickly be delivered or comforted by thee. For thou wilt not forſake him for ever that truſts in thee. The freind is rare to be found, that continues faithfull in his freinds diſtreſſe: but thou, ô Lord, thou alone art faithfull at all times, and

a Prov. 10.

there is none like unto thee.

3 O how wiſe was that holy ſoule that ſaid: My minde is firmely ſetled and grounded in Chriſt! If it were ſo with me, then would not humane feare ſo eaſily trouble me, nor words move me. Who can foreſee all things? Who is able to beware beforehand of future evills? If things even foreſeene doe oftentimes hurt us, how can things unlooked for chooſe but wounde us greivouſly? But why did I not provide better for my ſelfe, miſerable wretch? Why alſo have I ſo eaſily given credit to others? But alas, we are men, and God knowes weake and fraile men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whom ſhall I give credit, Lord? to whom but to thee? Thou art the Truth that neither doeſt deceive, nor canſt be deceived. And on the other ſide, every man

man is a [a]lyar, weake, unconstant, and subject to fall, especially in words, and therefore we must not easily give credit even to that, which in outward shewe seemes at the first a certaine truth.

4 O with how great wisdome hast thou warned us to take heede of men? [b] and becauſe the enemies of man are his familiar and domesticall acquaintance, nor to trust, if one should say: Behold here, or behold there, I am taught to my cost, and I would to God I might thereby increase my care, and not my folly. Bewary, sayes one, bewary, keepe unto thy selfe what I tell thee: and whilest I hold my peace, and thinke it is secret, he cannot keep that secret, which he desired should be secret, but presently discloses me and himselfe, and goes his way. From such tales, and such

a Psal. xxx. b Math. 10. Luc. 17.

improvident people, protect me, Lord, that I fall not into their hands, nor ever commit such errours. Give me grace my God to observe truth, and constancy in my words, and remove farre from me a deceiptfull tongue. What I am not willing to suffer, I ought by all meanes to avoid.

5 [a] O how good and quiet a thing it is to be silent, and not to talke of others, nor to beleeve all that is said, nor easily to report what we have heard, to lay ones selfe open to few, always to seeke after thee the beholder of the heart? nor to be carried about with every wind of wordes, but to desire that all things both within and without, be accomplished according to thy will and pleasure. How secure is it for the keeping of heavenly grace, so fly the sight of men? and not to seeke

a Prov. 25.

seeke those things, that seeme to cause admiration abroad; but to follow that with all diligence, which brings amendment of life, and increase of fervour.

6 To how many hath vertue, knowne and over hastily commended, beene hurtfull? How profitable hath grace beene, kept with silence in this mortall life, which is nothing but a [a] perpetuall temptation, and a warfare?

a Iob 7.

CHAP. XLVI.

Of putting our trust in God, when evill words arise.

1 SOnne, be constant, and put thy trust in me. For what are words, but words? They passe through the ayre, [a] but hurt not. If thou be guilty, determine willingly to amend thy selfe: if thou be innocent, resolve to suffer this willingly

a Psal 32.

lingly at leaſt for God It is a ſmall matter to ſuffer ſometimes a fewe wordes, if thou haſt not yet the courage to endure ſtripes. And why doe ſmall matters goe to thy heart, but for that thou art yet carnall, and regardeſt men more then thou oughteſt? Becauſe thou art afraid to be deſpiſed, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and therefore ſeekeſt ſhaddowes of excuſes.

2 But looke better unto thy ſelfe, and thou ſhalt ſee that the world yet lives in thee, and a vaine deſire to pleaſe meu. For when thou refuſeſt to be humbled, and reproved for thy faults, it is ſurely evident, that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the world, nor the world perfectly crucified to thee. But give diligent eare to my words, and thou ſhalt little reſpect en thouſand wordes ſpoken by men.

men. Behold, if all ſhould be ſpoken againſt thee that could be moſt maliciouſly invented, what would it [a] hurt thee, if thou ſuffereſt it, to paſſe, and madeſt no reckoning at all of it? Could all thoſe wordes pluck as much as one hair from thy head?

3 But he that hath not his heart within him, nor God before his eyes, is eaſily moved with every little diſpraiſe; [b] when as he that truſtes in me, and confides not in his owne judgement, ſhall be free from humane feares. For I am the Judge and diſcerner of all ſecrets, I knowe how the matter paſſed, I knowe him that offers the injury, and him that ſuffers it. From me hath this word proceeded, this hath happened by my permiſſion, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. I ſhall [c] judge the guilt

a Mash.10 Luc.11. b Pſal.7. c Luc.8.

guilty and the innocent, but by a ſecret judgement I would before-hand try them both.

4 The teſtimony of men oftentimes deceives: my judgement is alwayes true, it ſhall ſtand and not be overthrowne. It is commonly hidden and ſecret, and not knowne in every thing but to few; notwithſtandingh it never erres, neither can it erre, although to the eyes of the fooliſh it ſeemes not right. Men ought therefore to [a] returne to me in every judgement, and not to ſtand in their owne opinions. For the juſt man will not be troubled, whatſoever happens unto him for God: and if any thing be wrongfully brought forth againſt him, he will not much care, neither will he vainely be glad, if by others he be with reaſon excuſed. For he conſiders that I am he, that

a Prov: 13.

that ſearches the heart and reines, and doe judge, not according to the outward face, nor humane apparence. [a] For that is oftentimes found coulpable in my ſight, that in the judgement of men is commendable.

5 O Lord my God, the juſt Judge, ſtrong and patient, thou knoweſt the frailty and perverſity of man, be thou my ſtrength, and all my truth, for mine owne conſcience ſuffiſes me not. Thou knoweſt that which I cannot reach unto, and therefore in every reprehenſion I ought to have borne it patiently; vouchſafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I have failed herein, and give me againe grace of greater ſufferance. For thy bountifull mercy is more avayla-ble to me for the obtaining of pardon, then my conceived juſtice [a] fo

a Apoc. 7. Pſal. 2.

a for the defence of my hidden conſcience. Although my conſcience accuſe me not, yet I cannot hereby juſtifie my ſelfe; for if thy mercy be away, no man living ſhall be juſtified in thy ſight.

a Pſal. 124. 1 Cor. 4.

CHAP. XLVII.

That all greivous things are to be endured for life everlaſting.

1 SOnne, let not the paines diſmay thee, which thou haſt undertaken for me, neither be thou diſcomforted for the tribulations which doe befall thee, but let my promiſe ſtrengthen and comfort thee in all events. I am able to reward thee above all meaſure. Thou ſhalt not long toyle here, nor alwayes be oppreſſed with greife. Attend a while, and thou ſhalt ſee a ſpeedy end of thy evils. There will come an houre when all

all labour and trouble ſhall ceaſe. Little and ſhort is all that paſſes away with time.

2 Doe as thou doeſt, [a] labour faithfully in my vineyard, I will be thy reward. Write, read, ſing, mourne, obſerve ſilence, pray, ſuffer croſſes manfully: life everlaſting is worthy of all theſe and greater combats. Peace ſhall come in the day which is knowne unto our Lord, and it ſhall not be day nor night, to wit, of this time, but everlaſting light, infinite brightneſſe, ſtedfaſt peace, and ſecure reſt. Then thou ſhalt not ſay, [b] Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? nor cry, [c] Woe be unto me, for that my dwelling in a ſtrange countrey is prolonged! For death ſhall be throwne downe, and health ſhall be without decay, no anxiety, bleſſed joy, ſweet and glorious company.

a Math. 20. b Rom. 7. c Pſal. 119.

3 If thou hadst seene the everlasting crownes of the Saints in heaven, and with how great glory [a] they now rejoyce who in times past were contemptible to this world, and esteemed unworthy of life it selfe: truely thou wouldest presently humble thy selfe even unto the earth: and wouldest rather seeke to be under the feete of all, then to have command, [a] so much as over one; neither wouldest thou desire pleasant dayes of this life, but rather rejoyce to be afflicted for God, and esteeme it thy greatest gaine to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4 O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, and didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy heart, how durst thou so much as once to complaine! Are not all painfull labours to be endured for ever-

a Sap. 3 5.

verlasting life? It is no small matter to loose or to gaine the Kingdome of heaven. Lift up thine eyes therefore unto heaven: behold I, and all my Saints with me, who in this world had great conflicts, doe now rejoyce, now are comforted, now are secure, now doe rest, and shall remaine with me everlastingly in the Kingdome of my Father.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the everlasting day, and shortnesse of this life.

O Blessed mansion of the heavenly City! O most cleare day of [a] eternity, which night obscures not, but highest Truth ever enlightens! Day ever pleasant, alwayes secure, never changing into contrary state! O that that day would once appeare,

a Apoc. 22.

and all theſe temporall things were at an end! To the Saints it ſhines gliſtering with everlaſting brightneſſe: but to pilgrimes upon earth, it appeares onely afarre of, and as it were through a glaſſe.

2 The inhabitants of heaven knowe how joyfull that day is; but the [a] baniſhed children of Eve bewaile the bitterneſſe, and tediouſneſſe of this. The dayes of this life are ſhort, and evill, full of ſorrow, and anguiſh; where man is defiled with many ſinnes, incumbred with many paſſions, diſquieted with many feares, filled with many cares, diſtracted with many curioſities, intangled with many vanities, compaſſed about with many errours, tryed with many labours, vexed with many temptations, weakened with delights, tormented with want,

3 C

[a] Iob 7.

3 O when will there be an end of these many labours! when shall I be delivered from the [a] miserable bondage of sinne? when shall I, ô Lord, thinke of thee alone? when shall I [b] perfectly rejoyce in thee? when shall I be without all impediment in true liberty, without all greife of minde, and body? when shall I have firme peace without trouble, peace secure, peace w t'in, peace without, peace every way assured? O good Jesu, when shall I stand to behold thee? when shall I contemplate the glory of thy kingdome? when wilt thou be all in all to me? O when shall I be with thee in thy kingdome, which thou hast prepared for thy beloved from all eternity! I am left a poore, and banished man in an enemies countrey, where there are dayly warres, and very great misfortunes.

a Rom. 7. b Psal 70.

4 Comfort my baniſhment, aſſwage my greife, for my whole deſire aſpires unto thee. And all is burdenſome to me, whatſoever this world offers to my comfort. I deſire intimely to enjoy thee, but I cannot attaine unto it. I would gladly fixe my heart on heavenly things, but temporall cares, and immortified paſſions weigh me downe. In minde I would be above all things, but I am forced to be ſubject to the fleſh againſt my will. Thus unhappy man I fight with my ſelfe, [a] *and am become greivous to my ſelfe, whileſt my ſpirit ſeeke after things that are above, and my fleſh that which is belowe.*

5 O what doe I interiourly ſuffer, whileſt in minde I conſider heavenly things, and ſuddenly in my prayers a multitude of fleſhly fancies preſent themſelves before me.

[a] *My*

a Rom. 7. and 8.

[a] *My God, be not farre from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy servant. Cast forth thy lightening, and disperse them; shoote thy darts, and breake all the phantasies of the enemy.* Gather my senses together unto thee: make me forget all worldly things. Graunt me grace speedily to cast away the fancies of vices. Succour me, everlasting Truth, that no vanity may move me. Come heavenly sweetnesse, and let all impurity flye from thy face. Pardon me also, and mercifully forgive me, as often as I thinke on any thing else in prayer besides thee. For I confesse truely that I am wont to be subject to many distractions. For I am not oftentimes there, where I doe corporally stand, or sit; but rather there whither my thoughts doe carry me. There I am where my thought is; and there oftenti-

a Psal. 70.

mes my thought is, where my affection is. That quickly occurres unto me, which is naturally delightsome, or through cuſtome pleaſing.

6 And for this reaſon thou who art Truth it ſelfe haſt plainely ſaid: [a] *VVhere thy treaſure is, there alſo thy heart is.* If I love heaven, I willingly thinke of heavenly things. If I love the world, I rejoyce at the felicity of the world, and am ſorry for the adverſity thereof. If I love the fleſh, I oftentimes imagine thoſe things which are pleaſing to the fleſh. If I love the ſpirit, I delight to thinke of ſpirituall things. For whatſoever things I love, of them I willingly ſpeake, and heare, and carry home with me the images of them. But bleſſed is the man who for [b] thee, ô Lord, bids farewell to all creatures; who violently reſiſts nature,

a Math. 6. b Math. 19.

uture, and through the fervour of spirit crucifies the concupiscences of the flesh, that with a cleare conscience he may offer pure prayer unto thee, and be worthy of the company of the angelicall Quires, all earthly things being interiourly and exteriourly excluded.

CHAP. XLIX.

Of the desire of eternall life, and how great things are promised to them that fight.

MY sonne, when thou perceivest a longing to eternall blisse, to be infused into thee from above; and desirest to depart out of the tabernacle of this body, that thou mayest without any shadowe of interchange contemplate my light; open thy heart, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole desire. Give the greatest thankes to the heavenly goodnesse

who deales with thee ſo favourably, viſits thee mercifully, ardently excits thee, lifts thee up powerfully, leaſt through thy owne weight thou fall downe to the vanities of the earth. Neither doeſt thou obtaine this by thy owne thought, and endeavour; but through the onely favour of heavenly grace, and divine bounty; that thou mayeſt profit in vertue, and greater humility, and prepare thy ſelfe to future battles, and endeavour to cleave unto me with the whole affection of thy heart, and ſerve me with a fervent deſire.

2 Sonne, fire often burnes, but the flame aſcends not up without ſmoke. In like manner the deſires of ſome men are earneſtly carried to the deſire of heavenly things, yet are they not free from temptation of carnall affection: and therefore it is not altogether purely

for

for the honour of God which they doe so earnestly requeſt of him. Such is also oftentimes thy desire which with much importunity thou repreſenteſt unto me. For it is not pure and perfect, which is infected with selfe intereſt.

3 Aske not that which is delightsome, and profitable to thee; but that which is gratefull, and honourable to me. For if thou judgeſt rightly, thou oughteſt to preferre, and followe my appointment, rather then thy owne desire, or any thing to be desired. I knowe thy desire, and have heard thy frequent groanes. [a] Now thou wouldſt be in the freedome of the glory of the sonnes of God. Now does the celeſtiall habitation, and the heavenly countrey full of joy delight thee. But the houre is not

a Iob 7.

yet come: for it is yet another time, to wit, a time of warre, a time of labour, and triall. Thou desireſt to be ſatisfied with the cheifeſt good; but thou canſt not attaine unto it for the preſent. I am it, expect me (ſayes our Lord) till the Kingdome of God come.

4 Thou art yet to be tried upon earth, and to be exerciſed in many things. Comfort ſhall be ſometimes given thee; but full ſatiety ſhall not be graunted. [a] Take courage therefore, and be ſtout as well in doing, as in ſuffering things contrary to thy nature. Thou muſt become a new man, and be changed into another. Thou muſt oftentimes [b] doe that which thou wouldſt not, and leave undone that which thou wouldſt. That which is pleaſing to others ſhall goe well forward, that which thou deſi-

a Ioſue 1. b Eph. 4.

eſt henceforth ſhall not ſpeede. That which others ſay, ſhall be obſerved; that which thou ſayeſt ſhall not be reckoned of: others ſhall aske and receive; thou ſhalt aske and goe without.

5 Others ſhall be great in the praiſes of men, but of thee there ſhall be no ſpeech: to others this or that ſhall be committed, but thou ſhalt be accounted fitt for nothing. And hereat nature will ſometimes repine, and it is much if thou endureſt it with ſilence. In theſe and ſuch like a faithfull ſervant of our Lord is wont to be tried how he can deny, and overcome himſelfe in all things. There is ſcarce any thing wherein thou haſt ſuch neede to mortifie thy ſelfe, as in ſeeing & ſuffering thoſe things which are contrary to thy will, but eſpecially when that is commanded which ſeemes to thee inconve-

convenient, and to little purpose: and ſince placed under authority thou dares not reſiſt a higher power, it therefore ſeemes hard unto thee to walke at the becke of another, and leave wholy thy owne way.

6 But conſider, ſonne, that theſe labours ſoone end, and have a reward gfeat above meaſure, and thou wilt conceive no greife thereby, but a ſtrong comfort of thy patience. For in regard of the little of thy will, which thou now willingly forſakeſt, thou ſhalt for ever have thy will in heaven. There indeed thou ſhalt have all that thon wilt, all that thou canſt deſire. There thou ſhalt enjoy all good, without feare of looſing it. There ſhall thy will be ever one with me. It ſhall deſire nothing ſtrange or private. There no man ſhall withſtand thee, no man complaine

plaine of thee, no man hinder thee, nothing come againſt thee; but all things deſired ſhall be there together preſent, and delight the whole deſire, and ſatiate it to the higheſt degree. There I will give thee glory for the reproach which thou ſuffereſt; a garment of praiſe for greife; for the loweſt place the ſeate of a kingdome for ever; there the fruit of obedience ſhall appeare, the labour of pennance rejoyce, and humble ſubjection ſhall be glorioufly crowned.

7 Now therefore bowe thy ſelfe humbly under the hands of all, and regard not who ſaid or commanded this: but of this take heede that whither thy Prelate, or inferiour, or thine equall require any thing of thee, or doe but inſinuate, thou take it all for good, and endeavour to fulfill it with a ſincere intention. Let one ſeeke this, ano-

another that; let him glory in this, another in that, and be praiſed a thouſand thouſand times. Yet doe thou rejoyce neither in this, nor that, but in the contempt of thy ſelfe, and in my good pleaſure, and ſole honour. This thou art to wiſh, that in life and death, God may be alwayes glorified in thee.

CHAP. L.

How a deſolate perſon ought to offer himſelfe into the hands of God.

1 LOrd God, holy Father, be thou now and for ever bleſſed; for that as thou wilt it is done, and what thou doeſt is good. Let thy ſervant rejoyce in thee, not in himſelfe, nor any thing elſe: for thou alone art the true gladneſſe, thou art my hope, and my crowne; thou art my joy and my honour. O Lord, what hath thy ſervant? but what he hath of thee even without

out any desert of his. Thine is all whatsoever [a] thou hast given, and whatsoever thou hast made. I am poore, and in labours from my youth, and sometimes my soule is heavy [b] even to teares, and sometimes is troubled in her selfe, by reason of passions which rise against her.

2 I desire the joy of peace, I crave the peace of thy children who are fed in the light of thy comfort. If thou give peace, if thou infuse holy joy, the soule of thy servant shall be full of sweetnesse, and devout in thy praise. But if thou withdraw thy selfe as very often [c] thou art wont, he will not be able to runne the way of thy commandments: but rather his knees are bowed to knocke his breast; for it is not with him as it was yesterday, and the day before, when

a 1. Cor. 4. b Psal. 87. c Psal. 118.

when thy light ſhined upon his head, and he was protected under the ſhadowe of thy wings from temptations ruſhing upon him.

3 O righteous Father, and ever to be praiſed, the houre is come that thy ſervant may be proved. O Father to be beloved, it is fit that in this houre thy ſervant ſuffer ſomething for thee. O Father to be honoured, the houre is come which from all eternity thou didſt foreknowe ſhould come that for a ſhort time thy ſervant ſhould interiourly be oppreſſed, but interiourly live for ever with thee; he ſhould be a little deſpiſed, humbled, and made as an abject in the ſight of men, and much afflicted with paſſions and infirmities, that he may riſe againe with thee in the riſing of new light, and be clarified in heaven. Thou haſt ſo appointed it, holy Father, and wilt

have it so, and this is fulfilled which thy selfe hath commanded.

4 For it is a favour to thy freind to suffer and be afflicted in this world for thy love; how often soever and by whom thou permittest it to be done. Without thy counsell and providence, and without cause nothing is done on earth. [a] *It is good for me, ô Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learne thy justifications*, and cast away all haughtinesse of heart, and presumption. It is profitable for me that shame hath covered my face, that I may rather seeke to thee for comfort then to men. I have learned also hereby to dread thy inscrutable judgements who afflictest the just with the wicked, but not without equity and justice.

5 I give thee thankes that thou hast not spared my sinnes, but hath

X scour-

[a] Psal 118.

ſcourged me with ſtripes of love, inflicting ſorrowes and cauſing diſtreſſes within and without. There is none under heaven that can comfort me but thou my Lord God the heavenly Phyſician of ſoules; [a] *who woundeſt and healeſt.* [b] *Bringeſt to hell, and draweſt backe againe; let thy correction be upon me, and thy rod ſhall inſtruct me.*

6 Behold, beloved Father, I am in thy hands, I bowe my ſelfe under the rod of thy correction, let my necke and ſholders feele thy ſtripes, that my crookedneſſe may be conformed to thy will Make me a pious and humble diſciple of thine, as thou art wont well to doe, that I may walke according to thy pleaſure. I commit my ſelfe, and all mine unto thee to be corrected. It is better here to be rebuked then hereafter. Thou knoweſt all, and every

[a] Tob. 13. [b] Pſal. 85.

every thing, and there is nothing in the conſcience of man hidden from thee. Before things are done thou knoweſt that they will happen, and thou haſt no neede that they ſhould teach thee, or admoniſh thee of thoſe things which are done on earth. Thou knoweſt what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation conduces to the purging the ruſt of ſinne. Doe with me according to thy deſired good pleaſure, and deſpiſe not my ſinnefull life better and more clearly knowne to none, then to thee alone.

7 Graunt me, ô Lord, to knowe what ought to be knowne, and to love what ought to be beloved, to praiſe that which is moſt pleaſing to thee, to eſteeme that which is moſt pretious to thee, or appeares ſo; to deſpiſe that which is contemptible in thy ſight. Suffer me

not to judge according to the ſight of the exteriour eye, nor to give ſentence according to the hearing of the eares of ignorant men; but to determine of ſpirituall and viſible things with a true judgement, and above all things ever to ſearch after the good pleaſure of thy will.

8 The ſenſes of men are often deceived in judging. The lovers of this world are deceived alſo in loving onely viſible things What is man the better therefore, becauſe he is reputed greater by man? The deceitfull deceives the deceitfull; the vaine the vaine; the blinde the blinde; and the feeble, the feeble; whileſt he exalts him; and does truely confound him, whileſt he vainely praiſes him. For how much every one is in thy ſight, ſo much he is, and no more, ſayes humble Saint Francis.

CHAP. LI.

That we ought to insist in lowly works, when we are not able for high things.

1 SOnne, thou art not alwayes able to continue in the fervent desire of vertue, nor to persist in the high pitch of contemplation; but thou must sometimes of necessity by reason of originall corruption descend to inferiour things, and beare the burden of this corruptible life even against thy will, and with irksomnesse. As long as thou carriest this mortall body, thou shalt feele trouble, and heavinesse of heart. Thou oughtest therefore in flesh often to bewaile the burthen of flesh, for that thou canst not alwayes persever in spirituall exercises, and derive contemplation.

2 It is then expedient for thee to flye to humble and exteriour wor-

kes, and to recreate thy ſelfe in good actions; to expect with a firme confidence my coming, and heavenly viſitation; to beare patiently thy baniſhment, and the dryneſſe of thy minde, till thou be viſited againe by me, and delivered from all anxieties: for I will make thee forget thy pains and enjoy interiour quietneſſe. I will lay open before thee the pleaſant fields of Scripture, and with an inlarged heart thou ſhalt beginne to runne the way of my commandments, and thou ſhalt ſay: [a] *The ſufferings of this time are not condigne to the future glory Which ſhall be reveaſed in us.*

a Rom. 5.

CHAP.

CHAP. LII.

That man must not esteeme himselfe Worthy of comfort, but rather worthy of stripes.

1 I Am not worthy, Lord, of thy comfort, or any spirituall visitation. And thou dealest therefore justly with me, when thou leavest me poore and desolate. For if I could shed teares like a sea, yet were I not worthy of thy comfort, and therefore I am worthy of nothing but stripes and punishments. For I have greivously and often offended thee, and very much sinned in many things. According therefore to true reason, I am not worthy of the least consolation. But thou clement and mercifull, who wilt not have thy workes to perish, to shew the riches of thy goodnesse to vessels of mercy, even beyond all ones owne desert

vouchsafest to comfort thy servant above humane measure. For thy comforts are not like humane comforts.

2 What have I done, ô Lord, that thou shouldest impart any heavenly comfort unto me? I remember not that I have ever done any good, but have alwayes beene prone to sinne, and sloathfull to amendment. It is true, and I cannot deny it; if I should say otherwise, thou wouldst stand against me, and there would be none to defend me. What have I deserved for my sinnes, but hell, and everlasting fire. In truth [a] I confesse my selfe to be worthy of all scorne, and contempt, and it is unfit I should dwell amongst thy devout servants. And though I be unwilling to heare this, yet notwithstanding according to truth, I will argue my sinnes

[a] Iob 9.

nes against me, that I may better deserve to obtaine thy mercy.

3 What shall I say, being guilty and worthy of all confusion? I can utter from my mouth no other word, but this onely: I have sinned, ô Lord, I have sinned, have mercy on me, and pardon me. [a] *Suffer me a little, that I may bewaile my greife, before I goe into the land of darknesse, and be covered with the shadow of death.* What doest thou cheifly require of a guilty and miserable sinner, but that he be contrite, and sorrowfull; and humble himselfe for his offences? In true contrition, and humblenesse of heart is bred hope of forgivenesse: a troubled conscience is reconciled, grace lost repared, man defended from future wrath, and God and a penitent soule meete together in the holy kisse of peace.

a Psal. 50. Iob 10.

4 Humble contrition for ſinnes is an acceptable ſacrifice unto thee, ô Lord, ſavouring much more ſweete in thy preſence, [a] then burning frankincenſe. This alſo the gratefull ointment which thou wouldſt have powred upon thy feete. For thou never deſpiſed an humble and contrite heart. There is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of the enemy; there is amended, and waſhed away whatſoever uncleanneſſe hath beene elſewhere contracted, and whatſoever is defiled.

a Luke 7.

CHAP. LIII.

That the grace of God is not given to thoſe, who ſavour of earthly things.

SOnne, my grace is pretious, it ſuffers not it ſelfe to be intermined with exteriour things, nor earthly comforts. Thou ought there-

therefore to caſt away all impediments of grace, if thou deſire to receive the infuſion thereof. Chooſe a ſecret place to thy ſelfe, love to dwell alone with thy ſelfe, deſire the converſation of none, but rather powre out devout prayers unto God, that thou mayeſt keepe thy mind compunct, and thy conſcience pure. Eſteeme the whole world as nothing. Preferre the vocation of God before all exteriour things. For thou canſt not attend unto me, and delight alſo in tranſitory things. [a] Thou oughteſt to ſequeſter thy ſelfe from thy acquaintance and freinds, and keepe thy minde deprived from all temporall comfort. So the bleſſed Apoſtle Saint Peter beſeeches all faithfull freinds of Chriſt, [b] *to keepe themſelves as ſtrangers, and pilgrimes in this world from carnall deſires which warre*

a Math. 19. b 1. Pet. 2.

2 O how great confidence ſhall he have at the houre of death, whom no affection to any earthly thing detaines in this world. But a weake minde is not yet capable of ſo retired a heart Neither does the ſenſuall man underſtand the liberty of an interne man. If notwithſtanding he will be ſpirituall, he ought to renounce as well that which is farre of, as that which is neare unto him, and to beware of no man more then himſelfe: if thou perfectly overcome thy ſelfe, thou ſhalt with more eaſe ſubdue the reſt It is a perfect victory to triumph over our ſelves. For he that keepes himſelfe under in ſuch ſort, that his ſenſuality be ſubject to reaſon, and reaſon in all things obedient to me, he is truely a conquerour of himſelfe, and lord of the world.

3 If

3 If thou desire to mount unto this height, thou must beginne manfully, and set the axe to the roote, that thou mayest roote out, and destroy thy secret inordinate inclination to thy selfe, and to all private and earthly good. Of this vice that man too inordinately loves himselfe, almost al depends whatsoever is wholy to be overcome There will presently ensue great peace, and tranquillity. But because few endeavour to dye perfectly to themselves; they remaine therefore intangled in themselves, and cannot be lifted up in spirit above themselves. But he that desires to walke freely with me, it is necessary he mortifie his naughty and inordinate affections, and adhere to no creature with desire through private love.

CHAP.

Chap. LIV.

Of different motions of nature and grace.

1 SOnne, obſerve diligently the motions of nature and grace: for they move very contrariety, and ſubtilty, and can hardly be diſtinguiſhed but by him that is ſpirituall, and interiourly enlightned. All men indeed deſire that which is good, and pretend ſome good in their wordes or deedes; and therefore under pretence of good many are deceived. Nature is crafty and ſeduces; intangles and deceives many, and alwayes intends her ſelfe for her end. But grace walkes ſimply, and avoides all ſhew of evill, pretends not deceits, and does all things purely for God in whom ſhe alſo finally reſts.

2 Nature will not willingly dye, or be kept in, or overcome, or be

ſubject, or of her owne accord ſubdued. But grace labours to mortifie her ſelfe, reſiſts ſenſuality, ſeekes to be ſubject, is willing to be overcome, and will not uſe her owne liberty. She loves to be kept under diſcipline, and deſires not to domineere over any; but alwayes to live, remaine, and be under God; and for God is ready humbly to bowe her ſelfe unto all men. Nature ſtrives for her owne commodity, and conſiders what profit ſhe may reape by another. But grace conſiders not what is commodious and profitable to her ſelfe, but rather what is profitable to many. Nature willingly receives honour and reverence. But grace faithfully attributes all honour and glory to God.

3 Nature feares ſhame and contempt, but grace rejoyces to ſuffer reproach for the Name of Jeſus.

Nature

Nature loves idleneſſe, [a] and bodily reſt; but grace cannot be idle, and willingly embraces labour. Nature ſeekes to have thoſe things that be curious and pretious, and flyes that which is meane and baſe. But grace delights in ſimple and humble things, deſpiſes not things deſpicable, nor refuſes to be clad with old cloathes. Nature reſpects things temporall, rejoyces at earthly gaine, ſorrowes for loſſe, is moved with every little injurious word. But grace aſcends to that which is everlaſting, and cleaves not to that which fades with time, nor is troubled with loſſe, nor exaſperated with injuries, for that ſhe hath placed her treaſure and joy in heaven, where nothing periſhes.

4 Nature is covetous, and does more willingly receive then give; ſhe loves proper & private things.

But

a Acts 5.

but grace is pittifull, and liberall to all, avoides singularity, is content with little, and judges it more happy to give then to receive. Nature inclines to creatures, to her owne flesh, to vanity, and to discourses. But grace drawes to God and to vertue, renounces creatures, flyes the world, hates the desires of the flesh, restraines wandrings abroad, blushs to be seen in publike. Nature is willing to have some exterior cõfort wherin she may delight her senses. But grace seekes comfort in God alone, and delightes above all visible things in the cheifest good.

5 Nature does all for her owne gaine and profit, she can doe nothing freely, but hopes to gaine either that which is equall, or better, or praise, or favour for her good deeds, and covets to have her gifts and workes much esteemed But grace seekes no temporall thing,

nor askes any other reward for her deserts then God alone, nor desires more of temporall necessaries then what may serve her for the obtaining of things eternall.

6 Nature rejoyces to have many freinds, and kinsfolks; she glories of noble birth and descent, pleases the powerfull, fawnes upon the rich, applaudes such as are like her. But grace loves her enemies, is not puffed up with multitude of freinds, nor esteemes place, or birth, unlesse it be joyned with great vertue; she rather favours the poore then the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent then potent, rejoyces much in the simple, and respects not the deceitfull, exhorts the good ever to labour for better gifts, and through vertue to be like the Sonne of God. Nature soone complaines of want and trouble, Grace constantly suffers want.

7 Na-

Nature turns all things to her selfe, and strives, and contends for her selfe. But grace reduces all to God, from whence they originally proceed; she ascribes no good to her selfe, neither does she arrogantly presume of her selfe; she contends not nor preferres her owne opinion before others, but in every sense and understanding submits her selfe unto the eternall wisdome, and to the divine judgement. Nature covets to knowe secrets, and to heare newes; she will appeare abroad, and make use of many things by the senses, she desires to be knowne, and to doe those things for which she may be praised, and admired. But grace cares not to heare newes, nor to understand curious matters; for all this springs from the old corruption, seeing nothing is new and durable upon earth: she teaches

therefore to restraine the senses, to avoid vaine pleasing and ostentation, humbl to hide those things which are worthy of praise and admiration; and from every thing, and every kno. ledg drawes profitable fruit, and the praises and honour of God: she will not have her selfe, or hers publickely pried; but desires that God may be blessed in his gifts, who of meere charity bestowes all things.

8 This grace is a supernaturall light, and a certaine speciall gift of God, and the proper marke of the elect, and pledge of everlasting salvation, which lifts up a man from earthly baseneſse to love heavenly things, and of a carnall makes a spirituall person. How much the more therefore nature is suppressed and subdued, so much the greater grace is infused, and the interne man dayly by new visitations

ions more perfected according to the image of God.

CHAP. LV.

Of the corruption of nature, and efficacy of divine grace.

1 MY Lord God who hast created me to thy image and likeneſſe; grant me this grace which thou haſt ſhewed to be ſo great, and ſo neceſſary to ſalvation, that I may overcome my moſt wicked nature, which drawes to ſinne and perdition [a] *For I feele in my fleſh the law of ſinne, contradicting the law of my minde, and leading me captive to obey ſenſuality in many things.* Neither can I reſiſt the paſſions thereof, unleſſe thy holy grace fervently infuſed into my heart does aſſiſt me.

2 Thy grace, and great grace is neceſſary that nature may be over-

[a] Rom. 7.

come, which is alwayes prone to evill from her youth. For it falling through Adam the first man, and being corrupted by sinne, the penalty of this spott hath descended upon all mankinde. That nature it selfe which by thee was created good, and without defect, is now accounted for vice, and infirmity of corrupt nature; since the motion thereof left unto it selfe, drawes to evill and abject things: for the little force which remaines, is like a certaine sparke lying hidden in the ashes. This is naturall reason it selfe compassed about with darknesse, retaining yet the power to discerne betwixt good and evill, and the distance betweene true and false, though it be unable to fulfill all it approves, and enjoyes not now the full light of truth, nor the former integrity of her affections.

3 Hence it is, my God, that according

ling to my interiour man, a I delight in thy Law, knowing thy command to be good, juſt, and holy; reproving alſo all evill, and ſhewing that ſinne is to be ſhunned. But in fleſh I ſerve the law of ſinne, whileſt I rather obey ſenſuality then reaſon. Hence it is that I have a will to good, but cannot tell how to doe it: for this reaſon I often propoſe many good things, but becauſe I want grace to helpe my infirmity, through a light reſiſtance I goe backe, and faint. Hence it happens that I knowe the way of perfection, and ſee clearly enough what I ought to doe, but preſſed downe with the weight of my owne corruption, I riſe not unto it.

4 How needfull, ô Lord, is thy grace to me to beginne any good worke, to goe forward, and to ac-

a Rom. 7.

compliſh it. For without thy grace I can doe nothing. But in thee I can doe all things, when thy grace does ſtrengthen me. [a] O heavenly grace, without which our merits are nothing, or any gifts of nature to be eſteemed! Without thy grace, ô Lord, arts are nothing worth, beauty nothing, riches nothing, ſtrength nothing, wit nothing, eloquence nothing: for gifts of nature are common to good and evill men; but grace or charity is the peculiar gift of the elect, wherewith being marked they are eſteemed worthy of life everlaſting. [b] This grace ſo much excells, that neither propheſie, nor the working of miracles, nor any ſpeculation how high ſoever, is of no eſteeme without it; yea neither faith, nor hope, nor other virtues are acceptable unto thee without charity and grace.

a Iohn 15. b 1 Cor. 13.

5 O moſt bleſſed grace which makes the poore in ſpirit rich in virtues, and renders the rich in many good things humble in heart; come deſcend unto me, repleniſh me in the morning with thy comfort, leaſt my ſoule ſhou d faint with wearineſſe and dryneſſe of minde.[a] I beſeech thee, ô Lord, that I may finde grace in thy ſight For thy grace is ſufficient for me, though other things be wanting, which nature deſires. If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I will not feare evills while thy grace is with me; ſhe is my ſtrength, ſhe gives adviſe and helpe, ſhe is ſtronger then all enemies, and wiſer then all the wiſe.

6 She is miſtreſſe of truth teacher of diſcipline, light of the heart, ſolace in affliction, baniſher of ſorrowe, expeller of feare, nurſe of

a Pſal. 142.

devotion, and fountaine of teares. What am I without it, but a peece of dry wood, and an unprofitable blocke to be caſt away? Let thy grace therefore, ô Lord, alwayes prevent and followe me, and make me ever diligent in good workes.

Chap. LVI.

That we ought to deny our ſelves, and imitate Chriſt by the Croſſe.

1 SOnne, as much as thou canſt goe out of thy ſelfe, ſo much mayeſt thou enter into me. As to be void of all deſire of externall things, makes internall peace, ſo interiourly forſaking of our ſelves conjoynes us to God. I will have thee learne the perfect leaving of thy ſelfe unto my will without contradiction, or complaint. Followe me, [a] *I am the way, the truth, and the life*. Without the way there is

a Iohn 14.

re is no going, without truth there is no knowledge, without life there is no living. I am the way which thou muſt followe, the truth which thou muſt beleive, the life which thou muſt hope for. I am the way which cannot lead amiſſe, the truth which cannot erre, the life which hath no end. I am a moſt ſtraight way, a ſupreame truth, a true life, a bleſſed life, an increated life If thou remaine in my way, thou ſhalt knowe the truth, and truth ſhall deliver thee, and thou ſhalt attaine to life everlaſting.

2 [a] *If thou wilt enter into life, keepe my commandments.* [b] *If thou wilt knowe the truth, beleive me.* [c] *If thou wilt be perfect, ſell all.* [d] *If thou Wilt be my diſciple, deny thy ſelfe.* [e] *If thou wilt poſſeſſe a bleſſed life, deſpiſe this preſent life.* If thou wilt be exalted

a Math. 19. b In the ſame place. c Luke 9. d John 12. e Luke 14.

alted in heaven, humble thy ſelfe in this world. If thou wilt reigne with me, beare the Croſſe with me. For the ſervants of the Croſſe onely finde the way of bliſſe, and true light.

3 Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for as much as thy life is ſtrict, and contemptible to the world, grant me to imitate the contempt of the world with thee: [a] *for the ſervant is not greater then his Lord, nor the diſciple above his Maiſter.* Let thy ſervant be exerciſed in thy holy life, ſince there is my health, and true ſanctity; whatſoever I heare or read beſides, does not recreate, or delight me fully.

4 Sonne, now thou knoweſt, and haſt read all theſe things: happy ſhalt thou be, if thou fulfill them. *He that hath my commandments, and keepes them, he it is that loues me, and*

[a] Math. 7. [b] Iohn 14.

and I will love him, and will manifest my selfe unto him, and will make him sit with me in the Kingdome of my Father. Lord, as thou hast said therefore, and promised, so verily let it happen that I may deserve it. I have received from thy hand a Crosse; I will beare it till death as thou hast laid it upon me. The life truly of a good Monke is a Crosse, but guide to Paradise It is now begunne, it is not lawfull to goe backe, or leave it off.

5 Let us take courage, my brethren, and goe forward together, Jesus will be with us. For Jesus his sake we have taken upon us this Crosse: for Jesus sake let us persever in it. He will be our helper, who is our guide, and forerunner. Behold our King walkes before us, who will fight for us. Let us follow him couragiously: let us not be dismayed, but be ready to dye with

with courage in the battle: let us not blemiſh our glory by flying from the Croſſe.

Chap. LVII.

That man be not too much dejected, when he falls into defects.

1 SOnne, patience and humility in adverſity are more pleaſing to me, then much comfort and devotion in proſperity. What, art thou greived for every little trifle done, or ſpoken againſt thee? though it had beene much more, thou oughteſt not to have beene moved. But now let it paſſe, it is not the firſt or any new thing, nor will not be the laſt, if thou live long. Thou art manfull enough, as long as no evill, or adverſe thing occures: thou canſt give good counſell alſo, and canſt ſtrengthen others with thy words. But when any tribulation ſuddenly knockes

at

at thy doore, thou art void of counsell, and strength. Behold thy great frailty which thou often experiences even on small occasions. Yet they are done notwithstanding for thy good, when these or the like things befall thee.

2 Put it out of thy heart the best thou canst, and if it touch thee, let it not deject thee, or trouble thee; beare it at least patiently, if thou canst not joyfully. Though thou be unwilling to heare it, and feelest disdaine, yet represse thy selfe, and suffer no inordinate word to passe out of thy mouth which may be a scandall to the weake. The storme now raised will be quickly asswaged, and the interiour greife appeased through the returne of grace. I doe yet live (sayes our Lord) ready to helpe thee and comfort thee more then before, if thou put thy

a Esa. 49.

thy truſt in me, and devoutly call upon thee.

3 Be more quiet in minde, and prepare thy ſelfe for greater ſuffering All is not loſt if thou feele thy ſelfe often afflicted, or greivouſly tempted: thou art a man, not God; thou art fleſh, not an Angell. How canſt thou looke to continue ever in the ſame ſtate of vertue, [a] when an Angell in heaven fell, and the firſt man in Paradiſe, both which ſtood not long? I am he who gives healthfull comfort to them that mourne, and doe raiſe up unto my divinity ſuch as knowe their owne frailty.

4 [b] *Bleſſed be thy Word, ô Lord, more ſweete unto my mouth then the hony and hony combe* What ſhould I doe in my ſo great tribulations and anguiſhes, unleſſe thou didſt comfort me with thy holy ſpeeches?

a Gen. 3. b Pſal. 118.

thes? What matter is it how much and what I ſuffer, ſo I may at length attaine unto the haven of ſalvation? Grant me a good end, grant me a happy paſſage out of this world: be mindfull of me, my God, and direct me the ſtreight way to thy Kingdome. Amen.

CHAP. LVIII.

Of no ſearching into high matters, and the ſecret judgements of God.

SOnne, beware thou diſpute not of high matters, nor of the ſecret judgements of God, why this man is forſaken, and that man aſſumed to ſo great grace; why this man is alſo ſo much afflicted, and that man ſo highly advanced. Theſe things exceed all humane power, neither can any reaſon or diſcourſe ſearch out the judgement of God. When therefore the enemy ſuggeſts theſe things unto

thee, or ſome curious people inquire of them, anſwere that of the Prophet: [a] *Thou art juſt, ô Lord, and thy judgement is right.* And that [b] *the judgements of our Lord are true and juſtified in themſelves.* My judgements are to be feared, not diſcuſſed: for to humane underſtanding they are incomprehenſible.

2 In like manner doe not inquire, or diſpute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holyer then the other, or which is greater in the Kingdome of heaven. Theſe things breed oftentimes ſtrife, and unprofitable contentions: they nouriſh alſo pride and vaine glory, whence ariſe envy and diſſentions, whileſt one will proudly preferre this Saint, another another. To deſire to knowe, and ſearch out ſuch thing, is to no purpoſe, but rather diſpleaſes the Saints. For

a Pſal. 118 b Pſal 18.

for I am not the God of dissen-
ion, but of peace, hich peace
onsists rather in true humility,
hen in exalting of ou elves

Some a e carried ith zeale of affection o love these, or those most. but this love is rather humane then divine. I am he who made all the Saints, I have given them grace, I have made them partakers of my glory. I knowe the merits of every one, I have prevented them in the benedictions of my sweetnesse I for knee my beloved before the beginning of the world; I c ose them out of the world, they chose n t me fi st. I called t em by grace, I dre them by mercy, I lead them through sundry temptations; I ave infused into them great comforts, I have given them perseverance, I have crowned their patience.

4 I knowe the first and the last,

I imbrace all with ineſtimable love, I am to be praiſed in all my Saints, I am to be bleſſed above all things; I am to be honoured in every one whom I have thus gloriouſly exalted, and predeſtinated without any of their owne precedent merits. He therefore that contemns one of the leaſt Saints, honours [a] not the greateſt, ſince I have made both the leſſe, and the greater. [b] And he that derogates from any of the Saints, derogates from me, and all the reſt of them in the Kingdome of heaven. All are one through the band of charity, they thinke the ſame, they will the ſame, and all love one another in one.

1 But yet (which is much more high), they love me more then themſelves, and their owne merits. For being elevated above them-

a Iam. 2. b Wiſd. 9.

themſelves, and drawne out of ſelfe love, they tend wholy unto the love of me, in which they reſt enjoyingly. There is nothing can put them backe, nothing preſſe them downe from being full of everlaſting Truth. They burne with the fire of unquenchable charity. Let therefore carnall and ſenſuall men, who knowe not how to affect any thing, but private joyes, forbeare to diſpute of the ſtate of the Saints. They adde and take away according to their owne inclination, not according to the pleaſure of eternall Truth.

6 There is in many ignorance, eſpecially in thoſe who are but little enlightened; they ſeldome love any with perfect ſpirituall love; they are yet much drawne with a naturall affection, and humane freindſhip to theſe, or thoſe; and as they experience themſelves in

earthl things, ſo they imagine of heavenly But there is an incomparable diſtance, which the imperfect know not, and the illuminated perſons diſcerne by revelation from above.

7 Beware therefore, my ſonne, that thou treate not curiouſly of theſe things which exceed thy knowledge: but labour for this, that thou mayeſt at leaſt have the meaneſt place in the Kingdome of God And if any did knowe who were holier then another, or accounted greater in the Kingdome of heaven; what would this knowledge profit him, unleſſe he would thereby humble himſelfe more in my ſight and ſtirre up his minde to praiſe my name with greater fervour? He does that which is more acceptable to God, who conſiders the greatneſſe of his ſinnes, and the ſmalneſſe of his ver-

tues,

tues, and how farre of he is from the perfection of the Saints, then he that disputes of their greatnesse, or littlenesse. It is better to pray to the Saints with devotion and teares, and crave their glorious suffrages with an humble minde, then to search into their secrets with vaine inquisition.

8 They are well, and right well contented, if men would content themselves, and refraine from their vaine discourses. They glory not of their owne merits, for they ascribe no good unto themselves, but attribute all unto me, who of my infinite charity bestowed all upon them. They replenished with so great love of my Godhead, and such superaboundant joy, that there is no glory wanting unto them, nor can any happinesse be wanting unto them All the Saints how much the higher they be in

glory, so much the more humble they are in themselves, and nearer, and more beloved to me. And therefore thou hast it written, *That they* [a] *did cast their crownes before God, and fell downe upon their faces before the Lambe, and adored him that lives for ever and ever. Amen.*

9 Many inquire who is greatest in the Kingdome of heaven or God, who knowe not whither they must be numbred amongst the least. It is a great matter to be even the least in heaven where all are great. *For all shall be called, and be the sonnes of God. The least shall be as a thousand, and a sinner of a hundred yeares shall die.* For when the disciples asked who was the greater in the Kingdome of heaven, they received such an answere: [b] *Vnlesse ye be converted, and become as children, you shall not enter into the King-*

a Apoc. 4. b Matth. 18.

Kingdome of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himselfe as this little childe, he is the greater in the Kingdome of heaven

10 Woe be to them that disdaine to humble themselves willingly with little children, for the low gate of the Kingdome of heaven will not admit them to enter. Woe also to [a] rich men who have their comforts; for whilest the poore enter into [b] the Kingdome of heaven, they shall stand waiting without. Rejoyce you that are humble, and exult you that are poore, for that yours is the Kingdome of God; yet so as you walke in truth.

a Math 6. b Math. 5.

CHAP. LIX.

That all hope and trust is to be fixed in God alone.

1 LOrd, what is my trust which I have in this life? or what is

the greateſt comfort of all things appearing under heaven? Is it not thou, my Lord God, whoſe mercies are without number? Where hath it beene wel with me without thee? or when could it be ill with me, when thou wert preſent? I had rather be poore for thee, then rich without thee. I rather chooſe to be a pilgrime upon earth with thee, then to poſſeſſe heaven without thee. Where thou art there is heaven, and there death and hell where thou art not. Thou art my deſire, and therefore I muſt needs ſigh after thee, and cry, and pray. In none laſtly can I fully confide, who in time of neceſſity may more opportunely helpe me, then thee onely, my God. [a] *Thou art my hope and my truſt* [b] *Thou art my comforter, and moſt faithfull to me in all things.*

2 All

a Pſal. 9. b Pſal. 141.

2 All men ſeeke their owne gaine. [a] thou onely ſeekeſt my ſalvation and profit, and turneſt all things to my good. And though thou expoſe me to many temptations and adverſities, yet thou ordaineſt all this for my profit, who art wont to prove thy beloved ſervants thouſand wayes, in which proofe thou oughteſt no leſſe to be beloved, and praiſed, then if thou didſt repleniſh me with heavenly conſolations.

3 In thee therefore, my Lord God, I put all my hope, and refuge, and place all my tribulation and anguiſh; for I finde all to be ſmoake, and inconſtant whatſoever I behold out of thee. For many freinds ſhall not availe me, nor ſtrong helpers aide me, nor prudent counſellors give a profitable anſwere, nor the bookes of the learned

a Phil 2.

learned comfort, nor any wealth deliver, nor any ſecret place defend, if thou thy ſelfe doe not aſſiſt, helpe, ſtrengthen, comfort, inſtruct and keepe us.

4 For all things which ſeeme to be ordained for the reſt and felicity of man, when thou art abſent, are nothing, and conferre no felicity at all. Thou art therefore the end of all that is good, and the height of life and depth of wiſedome. And the moſt ſtrong comfort of thy ſervants is to truſt in thee above all things. To thee I lift up mine eyes, in thee I confide. My God, Father of mercies, bleſſe and ſanctifie my ſoule with heavenly bleſſing, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the ſeate of thy eternall glory. And that nothing may be found in the temple of thy greatneſſe that may offend the eyes of thy Majeſty. According

to

to the greatneſſe of thy goodneſſe, and the multitude of thy mercies, take pitty upon me, and heare the prayer of thy poore ſervant, who is farre exiled from thee in the band of the ſhadow of death. Protect and keepe the ſoule of thy little ſervant amidſt ſo many dangers of this corruptible life, and through the aſſiſtance of thy grace direct him in the way of peace to the countrey of everlaſting light.

The end of the third Booke.

THE

THE IV BOOK OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Of the Sacrament of the Body of Christ.

The Preface.

Come unto [a] me all ye that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you, sayes our Lord [b] The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world. [c] Take ye, and eate, this is my body that shall be delivered for you. [d] This doe you in commemoration of me. He that eates my flesh and drinkes my blood remaines in me,

a Math. 11. b Iohn 6. c Math. 26. d 1. Cor. 11.

me, and I in him [a] The words which I have ſpoken unto you are ſpirit and life.

a Iohn 6.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

With how great reverence Christ is to be received

1 THeſe are thy words, ô Chriſt everlaſting Truth, though not ſpoken at one time, nor written in one place. Since therefore they are thy words, they are all thankfully and faithfully to be received by me. They are thine, and thou haſt ſpoken them for my ſalvation. I willingly receive them from thy mouth, that they may be more aptly printed in my heart. Theſe devout words full of ſweetneſſe and love, doe ſtirre me up, but mine owne offences terrifie me, and my impure conſcience repulſes

pulſes me from receiving ſo great myſteries The ſweetneſſe of thy words does incourage me, but the multitude of my ſinnes does oppreſſe me.

2 Thou commandeſt me to come confidently unto thee, if I will have part with thee; and to receive the food of immortality, if I deſire to obtaine everlaſting life, and glory. * *Come*, ſayes thou, *unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refreſh you.* O ſweete and lovely word in the eare of a ſinner, that thou my Lord God ſhouldeſt invite the poore and needy to the communion of thy moſt bleſſed Body. But who am I, Lord, that may preſume to approach unto thee? Behold the heavens cannot countaine thee, and thou ſayeſt, *Come ye all unto me.*

3 What meanes this moſt pious vouch-

* Matth. 11.

vouchsafing, and so loving an invitation? How shall I dare to come, who am conscious of no good thing whereupon I may presume? How shall I bring thee into my house, who have often offended thy most gracious countenance? The Angels, and Archangels reverence thee, the Saints and just men feare thee, and thou sayest, *Come ye all unto me.* Unlesse thou, ô Lord, didst say it, who would believe it to be true? and unlesse thou didst command it, who would dare to approach? Loe, [a] Noah a just man laboured a hundred yeares in building of the Arke, that he with a few might be saved: and how can I in one houres space prepare my selfe with reverence to receive the Maker of the world?

4 Moyses thy servant, thy great and speciall freind, made an Arke

a Gen. 6.

of incorruptible wood, which he alſo covered with [a] moſt pure gold to place therein the Tables of the Law. And ſhall I, rotten creature, ſo lightly dare to receive the Law-maker and Giver of life? [b] Salomon the wiſeſt of the Kings of Iſrael beſtowed ſeven yeares in building a magnificent Temple in praiſe of thy Name, and celebrated the feaſt of the dedication thereof eight dayes together. He offered a thouſand peaceable ſacrifices, and ſolemnly ſet the Arke of the Covenant in the place [c] prepared for it with ſound of trumpet, and Jubilee. And I the moſt unhappy and pooreſt of men, how ſhall I bring thee into my houſe, who can hardly ſpend one half houre devoutly? and I would to God it were once almoſt one half houre worthily.

5 O my God, how much did they

a Exod. 25. and 26. b 3. Kings 6. 3. Kings 8.

they endeavour to doe to pleaſe thee! Alas, how little it is that I doe! how ſhort a time doe I ſpend when I prepare my ſelfe to receive! I am ſeldome wholy recollected, very ſeldome altogether free from diſtraction; and yet ſurely no indecent cogitation ſhould occurre in the wholeſome preſence of thy Deity, nor any creature buſy me; for I am not to receive as gueſt an Angell, but the Lord of Angells.

6 And yet there is great differen ce betwixt the Arke of the Covenant, and the reliques thereof, and thy moſt pure Body with the unſpeakable vertues thereof: betweene thoſe legall ſacrifices, figures of future things, and the true ſacrifice of thy Body, the compliment of all ancient ſacrifices. Why therefore doe I not become more fervent to enjoy thy venerable pre-

ſence? why doe I not prepare my ſelfe with greater care to receive thy ſacred gifts, ſith thoſe holy ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, yea Kings alſo and Princes with the whole people have ſhewed ſo great zeale of devotion to thy divine ſervice?

7 The moſt devout King David daunced before the Arke of God with all his force, calling to minde the benefits beſto..ed in times paſt on the Fathers: [a] he made organs of ſundry kindes, he publiſhed Pſalmes, and appointed them to be ſung with joy: he himſelfe alſo plaid upon the harpe: being inſpired with the grace of the holy Ghoſt, he taught the people of Iſrael to praiſe God with their whole heart, and with delightfull voices every day to bleſſe and praiſe him. If ſo great devotion was then uſed,

a 2. King. 6.

used, and such memory of divine praise before the Arke of the Testament; what reverence and devotion is now to be performed by me and all Christian people in the presence of this Sacrament, in receiving the most excellent Body of Christ?

8 Many runne to sundry places to visit the Reliques of the Saints, and are astonished when they heare of their miraculous workes. They behold the high buildings of Churches, and kisse their sacred bones wrapt in silke and gold And behold thou art here present with me on the Altar, my God, the Holy of holies, Creatour of all things, and Lord of Angells. Curiosity oftentimes and novelty of things not seene before, drawe men to behold such sights; and little fruit of amendment is reaped thereby, especially where there is such incon-

ſtant wandring, without true contrition. But here in the Sacrament of the Altar thou art wholy preſent, my God and Man Jeſus Chriſt, where plentifull fruit of eternall ſalvation is alſo reaped, as often as thou art worthily and devoutly received. And to this not any levity, not curioſity, or ſenſuality invites, but firme faith, devout hope, and ſincere charity.

9 O God the inviſible Creator of this world, how wonderfully doeſt thou deale with us? how ſweetly and graciouſly doeſt thou diſpoſe of thy elect, to whom thou offereſt thy ſelfe to be received in the Sacrament? For this exceeds all underſtanding of man. This cheifly moves the hearts of the devout, and inflames their deſire, ſince thy true faithfull ſervants, who diſpoſe their whole life to amendment, by this moſt worthy Sacrament,

receive oftentimes great grace of devotion, and love of vertue.

10 O admirable and hidden grace of this Sacrament, which the faithfull onely of Christ doe know; but the unfaithfull, and such as are slaves to sinne cannot experience. In this Sacrament spirituall grace is given, and lost vertue restored in the soule, and beauty disfigured by sinne returns againe. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulnesse of infused devotion not onely the minde, but the weake body also feeles great increase of strength.

11 Our coldnesse and negligence is much verily to be bewailed and pitied, that we are not drawne with greater affection to receive Christ, in whom all the hope and merit of those who are to be saved does consist. For he is our sanctification and redemption. He is

the comfort of passengers, and the everlasting fruition of the Saints. It is much therefore to be lamented, that many doe so little consider this saving mystery, which rejoyces heaven, and conserves the whole world. O blindnesse and hardnesse of mans heart, that does not more deeply weigh so ineffable a gift; but rather through dayly use thereof comes not to regard it.

12 For if this most holy Sacrament were celebrated in one onely place, and consecrated by one onely Preist in the world; with how great desire doest thou thinke would men be affected to that place, and to such a Preist of God, that they might heare the divine mysteries celebrated? But now there are many Preists made, and Christ is offered up in many places, that so the grace and love of God

God to man may appeare so much the greater, how much more this sacred Communion is common throughout the world Thankes be to thee, good Jesu eternall Pastor, who hast vouchsafed to refresh us poore and banished men with thy most precious Body and Blood, and to invite us to the receiving of these mysteries with the words of thy owne mouth, saying, [a] *Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*

a Math. 11.

CHAP. II.

That the great goodnesse and charity of God is bestowed on man in this Sacrament.

1 PResuming on thy great goodnesse and mercy, ô Lord, I being sicke approach unto my Saviour, hungry and thirsty to the fountaine of life, needy to the

King of heaven, a ſervant to his Lord, a creature to his Creator, deſolate to my pious Comforter. [a] *But whence is this to me, that thou comeſt to me?* what am I, that thou ſhouldeſt beſtowe on me thy ſelfe? How dare a ſinner appeare before thee? and how doeſt thou vouchſafe to come unto a ſinner? Thou knoweſt thy ſervant, and ſeeſt that he hath no good in him; why doeſt thou this for him? I confeſſe therefore my unworthineſſe, and acknowledge thy goodneſſe; I praiſe thy mercy, and give thee thankes for thy exceſſive charity. Thou doeſt this truely for thy owne ſake, not my merits. to the end thy goodneſſe may be better knowne unto me, thy charity more aboundantly ſhewed, and thy humility more highly commended. Since therefore it is thy pleaſure, and

[a] Luke 1.

and thou haſt commanded that it ſhould be ſo; this thy vouchſafing is pleaſing alſo to me, and I doe wiſh that my offences may be no hinderance.

2 O moſt ſweete and benigne Jeſu, how great reverence and thankes with perpetuall praiſe is due unto thee, for the receiving of thy ſacred Body, whoſe dignity no man is found able to expreſſe? But what ſhall I thinke of in this Communion, in the acceſſe to my Lord, whom I cannot duely reverence, and yet deſire to receive him devoutly? What can I thinke of better and more profitable, then to humble my ſelfe entirely before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodneſſe above me? I praiſe thee, my God, and exalt thee for ever. I deſpiſe my ſelfe, and ſubject my ſelfe unto thee, even unto the depth of my unworthineſſe.

3 Be-

3 Behold thou art the Holy of holies, and I the ſcumme of ſinners Behold thou boweſt thy ſelfe downe unto me, who am not worthy to looke up upon thee. Behold thou comeſt to me, it is thy will to be with me, thou inviteſt me to thy banquet, thou wilt give me thy heavenly food and bread of Angels to eate, no other truely then thy ſelfe [a] *the living bread that deſcended from heaven, and giveſt life to the world.*

4 Behold whence love proceeds, what a bounty ſhines forth? how great thankes and praiſes are due unto thee for theſe things? O how wholeſome and profitable was thy counſell, when thou ordainedſt it! how ſweete and pleaſant thy banquet, when thou gaveſt thy ſelfe to be our food! how wonderfull thy worke, ô Lord, how powerfull

[a] Pſal. 77. Iob 6.

all thy vertue, how ineffable thy truth! [a] *For thou spoke the word, and all things were made.* And this as done which thou commandest it is a thing wonderfull and worthy of faith, surpassing humane understanding, that thou, ô my Lord God, true God and man, art wholy contained under a small forme of bread and wine, and without being consumed, art eaten by the receiver [b] Thou ô Lord of all things, who hast neede of none, wouldest dwell in us by the Sacrament; preserve my heart and body unspotted, that with a cheerfull and pure conscience I may be often able to celebrate thy mysteries Receive them to my everlasting salvation, which thou cheifly ordained and instituted for thy honour and perpetuall memory.

6 Rejoyce my soule, and give thankes

a Gen. 2. Psal. 148. b Psal. 15.

thankes unto God for ſo noble a gift, and ſingular a comfort left unto thee in this vaile of teares. For as often as thou calleſt to minde this myſtery, and receiveſt the Body of Chriſt; ſo often thou doeſt the worke of thy redemption, and art made partaker of all the merits of Chriſt. For the charity of Chriſt is never diminiſhed, and the greatneſſe of his propitiation is never exhauſted. Thou oughteſt therefore alwayes to diſpoſe thy ſelfe hereunto through a freſh renewing of the minde, and to weigh with attentive conſideration this great myſtery of thy ſalvation. So great, new, and joyfull it ought to ſeeme to thee, when thou ſayeſt or heareſt Maſſe, as if the ſame day Chriſt firſt deſcending into the wombe of the Virgin were made Man, or hanging on the Croſſe did ſuffer and dye

ye for the ſalvation of man-
kinde.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

BEhold I come unto thee, ô Lord, that it may be well with me through thy gift, and that I may be delighted in thy holy Banquet, which thou, ô Lord, haſt prepared in thy ſweetneſſe for the poore. Behold in thee is whatſoever I can, and ought to deſire. Thou art my ſalvation and my redemption, my hope and my ſtrength, my honour and my glory. Make this day therefore the ſoule of thy ſervant joyfull, [a] becauſe I have lifted up my ſoule to thee, ô Lord Jeſus. I deſire now to receive thee devoutly and reverently; I doe long to bring thee into

a Pſal. 67. b Pſal. 85.

into my house, that with Zachæus I may deserve to be blessed by thee, and numbred amongst the sonnes of Abraham. My soule thirsts to receive thy Body, my heart aspires to be united with thee.

2 Give thy selfe to me, and it suffises for besides thee no comfort is available. I cannot be without thee, nor live without thy visitation. And therefore I must come often unto thee, and receive thee as the onely remedy of my health, least perhaps I faint in the way, if I be deprived of heavenly food. For so thou didst say, most mercifull Jesus, preaching once to the people, and curing sundry diseases: *a I will not send them from fasting, least they faint in the way.* Deale how in like manner with me, who hast left thy selfe in the Sacrament for the

a Math 15. Math. 18.

he comfort of thy faithfull. For hou art the ſweete Refection of he ſoule; and he who ſhall eate hee worthily ſhall be heire, and partaker of everlaſting glory. It is neceſſary truely for me who oftentimes fall and ſinne, ſo quickly grow dull and faint, that by frequent prayers and confeſſions, and the holy receiving of thy Body, I renew, cleanſe, and inflame my ſelfe, leaſt perhaps by longer abſtayning, I fall from my holy purpoſes.

3 [b]*For the ſenſes of man are prone to evil from his youth*, and unleſſe thy divine remedy help him, he quickly ſlides to worſe. This holy Communion therefore drawes backe from evil, and ſtrengthens in good. For if I be now ſo often negligent, and tepid when I communicate and ſay Maſſe, what

b Gen. 8.

would it be, if I did not take this remedy, and should not seeke so great a helpe? And though every day I am not fit, or well disposed to say Masse, yet I will endeavour at convenient times to receive the divine mysteries, and make my selfe partaker of so great a grace. For this is the onely principall comfort of a faithful soule, whilest she is a pilgrim from thee in this mortal Body, that being often mindful of her God, she may receive her beloved with a devout mind.

4 O wonderfull Benignity of thy piety towards us, that thou, O Lord, Creator and Giver of life to all spirits doest vouchsafe to come unto a poore soule, and with thy whole Godhead and humanity to repleuith her hunger! O happy minde, and blessed soule that deserves to receive thee her Lord God devoutly, and in the Lord

receiving of thee to be repleniſhed with ſpirituall joy! O how great a Lord does ſhe entertaine! How beloved a gueſt does ſhe harbour! How pleaſant a companion does ſhe receive! How faithfull a freind does ſhe accept! How bountifull and noble a Spouſe does ſhe embrace, who is to be beloved alone all that is to be beloved, and all that may be deſired Let heaven & earth, and all their beauty be ſilent in thy preſence, my moſt ſweete Beloved For what beauty and praiſe they have proceeds from thy liberality, and ſhall not equall the beauty of thy Name,[c] *Of whoſe wiſdome there is no end.*

[c] Pſal. 146.

CHAP. IV.

That many benefits are beſtowed on them who communicate devoutly.

O My Lord God prevent thy ſervant in the bleſſings of thy

Pſal. 146.

ſweetneſſe, that I may deſerve to approach worthily, and devoutly to thy magnificent Sacrament. Stirre up my heart to thee, and deliver me from greivous heavineſſe; [a] viſit me with thy comfort, that I may taſte in ſpirit thy ſweetneſſe which plentifully lyes hid in this Sacrament as in the fountaine. Give light alſo to mine eyes to behold ſo great a myſterie, and ſtrengthen me to beleive it with undoubted faith. For it is thy worke, not mans power. Thy ſacred inſtitution, not mans invention. For man of himſelfe is not found able to comprehend, and underſtand theſe things which ſurpaſſe even the ſubtility of Angels. What ſhall I therefore unworthy ſinner, earth and aſhes, be able to ſearch, and comprehend of ſo high and ſacred a myſterie,

O

[a] Pſal. 105.

2 O Lord! in ſimplicity of heart with a good and firme faith; and at thy commandment, I come unto thee with hope and reverence; & I do verily beleive that thou art here preſent in the Sacrament, God and man. Thy pleaſure is therefore that I receive thee, and through charity unite my ſelfe to thee. Wherefore I do recurre unto thy clemency, and do begge thee to give me ſpeciall grace, that I may wholy melt in thee, & abound with love, and heerafter never admit any exteriour comfort. For this moſt high and worthy Sacrament is the health of the ſoule and body, the remedy of all ſpiritual ſickneſſe, by it my vices are cured, paſſions bridled, temptations overcome, or leſſened, greater grace infuſed, vertue begunne encreaſed, faith confirmed, hope ſtrengthned, charity inflamed and enlarged.

3 For thou haſt beſtowed, and ſtill oftentimes doeſt beſtow many benefits in this Sacrament upon thy beloved who receive it devoutly, my God, Receiver of my ſoule, Reparer of humane infirmity, and the Giver of all interiour comfort. For thou imparteſt unto them much comfort againſt ſundry tribulations, and liftest them up from the depth of their owne dejection, to the hope of thy protection and does interiourly recreate and illuſtrate them with a certaine new grace; in ſuch ſort that they who before Communion felt themſelves heavy and indiſpoſed, fed afterwards with this celeſtiall Meate and drinke, doe finde themſelves changed to the better; which thou ſo freely imparts to thy elect that they may truly acknowledge, and evidently experience, that they have nothing of themſelves, and what-

whatsoever grace and good they have, it is from thee For of themselves they are cold, dull, and indevout; but by thee they are made fervent, agile, and full of devotion. For who is he that approaching humbly unto the fountaine of sweetnesse, does not carry away some little sweetnesse? or who standing by a great fire, receives not some small heate thereby? [a] And thou art a fountaine alwayes overflowing, [b] and a fire ever burning, and never decaying.

4 Wherefore if I may not draw at the full out of this fountaine, or drinke my fill, I will notwithstanding set my lips to the mouth of this heavenly conduict, that I may draw from thence some small drop to refresh my thirst, to the end I wither not wholy. And though I cannot be yet so heavenly, and inflamed

a Esa. 12. b Lev. 6.

flamed (as a Cherubine or Seraphine) yet will I endeavour to apply my ſelfe to devotion, and diſpoſe my ſelfe to obtaine ſome ſmall ſparke of divine fire through the humble receiving of this life-giving Sacrament. And whatſoever is wanting to me, good Jeſu, moſt holy Saviour, doe thou ſupply for me mercifully and graciouſly, who haſt vouchſafed to call all unto thee, ſaying, [a] *Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refreſh you.*

5 I truely labour in the ſweate of my browes, [b] and am vexed with greife of heart: I am burdened with ſinnes, and am troubled with temptations: I am intangled and oppreſſed with many evil paſſions, and there is none to helpe me, none to deliver and ſave me, but thou, my Lord God, my Saviour, to

a Matth. 11. b Genes. 3.

to whom I commit my selfe, and all mine, that thou mayest keepe me, and bring me to life everlasting. Receive me to the honour and glory of thy Name, who hast prepared thy Body and Blood to be my meate and drinke Graunt, Lord God, my Saviour, that through frequenting thy mystery, the affection to my salvation and devotion may increase.

CHAP. V.

Of the dignity of the Sacrament, and Preistly function.

1 IF thou hadst Angelical purity, [a]and the sanctity of Saint John Baptist, thou wert not worthy to receive or handle this Sacrament. For it is not within the compasse of the deserts of men, that man should consecrate and handle the Sacrament of Christ, to the end he

a Math. 18.

receive for food [a] the bread of Angels. A great myſtery and great is the dignity of Preiſts, to whom is granted that which is not permitted to Angels. For Preiſts onely rightly ordered in the Church, have power to celebrate and conſecrate the Body of Chriſt. The Preiſt is truely the Miniſter of God, uſing the words of God by the command and inſtitution of God. But [b] God is there the principall Author and inviſible worker, to whom is ſubject all that he pleaſes, and all that he commands does obey.

2 Thou oughteſt therefore to give more credit to God Almighty in this moſt excellent Sacrament, then to thy owne ſenſe, or any viſible ſigne. And therefore thou art to come to this myſtery with feare and reverence. Conſider then

a Pſal. 77. b Gen. 1. Pſal. 148. and Rom. 9.

hen attentively, and behold what he miniſtery is, which is delive-ed unto thee [a] by the impoſition of the hands of a Biſhop. Loe, thou art made a Preiſt, and conſecrated to ſay Maſſe; ſee now that faith-fully and devoutly in due time thou offer ſacrifice unto God, and carry thy ſelfe ſo as thou mayeſt be without reproofe. Thou haſt not lightened thy burden, but art now bound in a ſtricter band of diſci-pline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of ſanctity. A Preiſt ought to be adorned with all kinde of vertue, and to give example of good life to others. [b] His conver-ſation ſhould not be according to the popular and common way of men, but with the Angels in hea-ven, and perfect men on earth.

3. A Preiſt arrayed in ſacred veſt-ments, is the Vicegerent of Chriſt, hum-

a 1. Tim. 4. b Phil. 3.

humbly and with a proſtrate mind to pray unto God for himſelfe and all the people [a] He hath before and behind the ſigne of the Croſſe of our Lord, to the end he may remember the Paſſion of Chriſt. He beares the Croſſe before him in the veſtment, that he may diligently behold the footeſteps of Chriſt, and fervently endeavour to follow them. He is marked with the Croſſe behind, that he may patiently ſuffer for God whatſoever adverſities ſhall be laid upon by others. He beares the Croſſe before him, that he may lament his owne ſinnes; and the ſame behind, that he may with a compaſſionate heart bewaile the offences of others, and know that he is placed as a mediator betwixt God and a ſinner. Neither ought he to ceaſe from prayer and holy oblation, till he deſerve to

a Heb. 5.

o obtaine grace and mercy. When Preist does celebrate, he honours God, rejoyces the Angels, edifies the Church, helpes the living, gives rest to the dead, and makes himselfe partaker of good works.

Chap. VI.

An interrogation of the exercise before Communion.

1 WHen I weigh thy greatnesse, ô Lord, and my unworthinesse, I tremble very much, and am confounded in my selfe. For if I come not unto thee, I fly from life; and if I intrude my selfe unworthily, I incurre thy displeasure. What therefore shall I doe, my God, my Helper, and Counsellor in necessities?

2 Doe thou teach me the right way, appoint me some exercise suitable to this sacred Communion:

for

for it is profitable for me to know how I ſhould reverently, and devoutly prepare my heart unto thee for the healthfull receiving of thy Sacrament, or for celebrating ſo great and divine a ſacrifice.

CHAP. VII.

Of the diſcuſſion of our owne conſcience, and purpoſe of amendment.

1 ABove all things the Preiſt of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receive this Sacrament with great humility of heart, and lowly reverence, with a full faith and pious intention of the honour of God. Examine diligently thy conſcience, and to thy power purge and cleanſe it with true contrition, and humble confeſſion. So as there may be nothing in thee that thou canſt diſcerne, which may breed remorſe, or hin-

der

er thy free accesse. Repent thee of all thy sinnes in generall; in particular bewaile and greive for thy dayly offences. And if thou hast time, confesse to God in the secret of thy heart all the miseries of thy passions.

2 Lament and greive that thou art yet so carnall and worldly, so immortified in thy passions, so full of the motions of concupiscence, so ill governed in thy exteriour senses, so often intangled with vaine phancies, so much inclined to exteriour things, so negligent in thy interiour, so prone to laughter and dissolution, so hard to teares and compunction, so prone to ease and pleasures of the flesh, so dull to austerity and fervour, so curious to heare newes and see fine sights, so slacke to embrace that which leads to thy owne humiliation and contempt, so coveteous of abound-

dance,

dance, ſo niggardly in giving, ſo faſt in keeping, ſo inconſiderate in ſpeech, ſo unable to keepe ſilence, ſo incompoſed in manners, ſo importune in actions, ſo greedy to meate, ſo deafe to the Word of God, ſo haſty to reſt, ſo ſlow to labour, ſo watchfull to tales, ſo drowſy to warch in the ſervice of God, ſo haſty to make end, ſo wandring in attention, ſo negligent in ſaying the Office, ſo tepid in ſaying Maſſe, ſo dry in receiving, ſo quickly diſtracted, ſo ſeldome well recollected to thee, ſo ſuddenly moved to anger, ſo apt to take diſpleaſure againſt another, ſo prone to judge, ſo ſevere to reprehend, ſo joyfull in proſperity, ſo weake in adverſity, ſo often propoſing much good, and performing little.

3 Theſe and other thy defects confeſſed, and bewailed with ſorrow and great diſlike of thy owne infir-

infirmity; make a firme purpose alwayes to amend thy life, and to profit more. Then with full resignation, and with thy whole will, offer thy selfe up to the honour of my Name a perpetuall sacrifice in the altar of thy heart, faithfully committing thy soule and body unto me, that thou mayest so deserve worthily to come to offer sacrifice unto God, and receive availably to thy salvation the Sacrament of my Body.

4 For there is no oblation more worthy, nor satisfaction greater for the washing away of sinnes, then to offer one selfe up unto God purely, and wholy with the oblation of the Body of Christ in the Masse, and in Communion. If a man shall doe what lyes in him, and be truely penitent, as often as he shall come unto me for grace and pardon, [a] *I live, sayes our Lord,*

[a] Ezech 18.

(*who will not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he may be converted and live.*) For I will not remember his ſinnes any more, but all ſhall be forgiven him.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the oblation of Chriſt on the Croſſe, and reſignation of our ſelves.

1 AS I willingly offered my ſelfe to God my Father with my hands ſtretched out on the Croſſe, and my Body naked for thy ſinnes; ſo as nothing remained in me that was not turned into a ſacrifice for the appeaſing of the divine wrath: even ſo muſt thou offer thy ſelfe willingly unto me in a pure and holy oblation dayly in the Maſſe, with all thy ſtrength and affections, as haſtily as thou art able. What doe I more require of thee, then that thou endeavour to reſigne

reſigne thy ſelfe wholy to me. I reſpect not [a] whatſoever thou giveſt beſides thy ſelfe; for I ſeeke not thy gift but thee.

2 As it would not ſuffiſe thee, if thou hadſt all but me; ſo it cannot pleaſe me give what thou wilt beſides thy ſelfe. Offer thy ſelfe to me, and give thy ſelfe wholy to God, and thy oblation will be accepted. Behold, I offered my ſelfe wholy unto my Father for thee, and gave my whole Body and Blood for thy food, that I might be wholy thine, and thou remaine mine. But if thou abideſt in thy ſelfe, and doeſt not offer thy ſelfe freely to my will; thy oblation is not entire, neither ſhall the union betwixt us be perfect. A free offering therefore of thy ſelfe into the hands of God, ought to goe before all thy actions, if thou wilt ob-

a Prov. 23.

taine freedome and grace: and for this reaſon few are illuminated, and made interiourly free, ſince they doe not reſolve wholy to deny themſelves. My ſaying is undoubtedly true: [a] *Vnleſſe one forſake all, he cannot be my diſciple.* If therefore thou wiſh to be my diſciple, offer up thy ſelfe to me with all thy deſires.

a Luke 4.

CHAP. IX.

That We muſt offer our ſelves, and all that is ours to God, and pray for all.

1. THine, [a] ô Lord, are all things that are in heaven and in earth. I deſire to offer my ſelfe unto thee as free an oblation, and to remaine alwayes thine. In ſimplicity of heart, ô Lord, I offer my ſelfe unto thee this day to be thy ſervant, for ever to ſerve thee, and in

a Pſal. 23.

in a sacrifice of perpetuall praise. Receive me with this holy oblation of thy pretious Body which in the presence of invisible Angels attending I offer unto thee this day, that it may be for me and all the peoples salvation.

2 I offer unto thee, ô Lord, all my sinnes and offences, which I have committed in the sight of thee, and thy holy Angels, from the day wherein I could first sinne to this day, upon thy altar of reconciliation, that thou mayest consume and burne them all with the fire of thy charity, and wash out all the staines of my sinnes, and cleanse my conscience from all offence, and restore unto me thy grace which through sinne I lost, forgiving me fully all, and receiving me mercifully in the kisse of peace.

3 What can I doe for my sinnes,

but humbly confesse and bewaile them, and begge always for mercy? [a] I beseech thee heare me in thy aboundant mercy, where I stand before thee, my God. All my sinnes most highly displease me, I will never commit them againe, but am sorry, and will be sorry for them as long as I live, and am ready to doe pennance, and satisfy for them to the utmost of my power Forgive me, ô God forgive me my sinnes, for thy holy Name sake; save my soule which thou hast redeemed with thy pretious Blood Behold I commit my selfe to thy mercy: I resigne my selfe into thy hands, do with me according to thy goodnesse, not according to my malice and iniquity.

4 I offer also unto thee all my good workes, though they be very few, & imperfect, that thou mayest amend

a Psal 31.

amend and sanctify them, that thou mayest make them gratefull and acceptable to thee, and mayest alwayes perfect them more and more: and likewise bring me, sloathfull and unprofitable creature, to a blessed and happy end.

5 I offer also unto thee all the godly desires of devout persons, the necessities of my parents, freinds, brethren, sisters, and all those who are deare unto me, and that have done good either to my selfe, or others for thy love; and begged and desired me to say Masse, and pray for them, and all theirs, whither they be yet alive, or already dead, that they may all receive the helpe of thy grace, and benefit of comfort, protection from dangers, delivery from paines, that freed from all evills, they may joyfully give worthy thankes to thee.

6 I offer up also unto thee my

prayers, and ſacrifices of reconciliation for them eſpecially who have in any thing wronged, greived, or ſlandered me, or have done me any damage or diſpleaſure; and for all thoſe alſo whom I have at any time greived, troubled, or ſcandalized by words or deeds, knowingly or ignorantly, that it may pleaſe thee to forgive us all our ſinnes & mutuall offences: take away, ô Lord, from our hearts all jealouſy, indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatſoever may hurt charity, and weaken brotherly love. Have mercy, ô Lord, have mercy on thoſe who crave mercy, give grace to them that ſtand in need thereof, and grant that we may be ſuch as we may be worthy to enjoy thy grace, and attaine to life everlaſting.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That the holy Communion is not lightly to be forborne.

1 THou oughteſt to have often recourſe to the fountaine of grace, and divine mercy: to the fountaine of goodneſſe and all puritty, that thou mayeſt be cured of thy ſinnes and paſſions, and deſerve to be made more ſtrong, and vigilant againſt all deceits and temptations of the devill. The enemy knowing the greateſt profit and remedy to conſiſt in the holy Communion, endeavours by all meanes and occaſions that poſſibly he can, to withdraw and hinder faithfull and devout perſons from it.

2 For ſome when they diſpoſe to prepare themſelves to the ſacred Communion, ſuffer great aſſaults of the devill. For that [a] wicked ſpi-

a Iob 2.

rit (as it is written in Job) komes amongſt the ſonnes of God, to trouble them with his accuſtomed malice, or to make them over fearfull and perplexed, that ſo he may diminiſh their affection, or by impugning them, take away their faith, to the end they may altogether abſtaine from this Communion, or at leaſt frequent it with leſſe devotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his frauds and phancies, though they be never ſo foule and horrid; but all his phancies are to be retorted backe on his owne head. He is miſerable wretch to be contemned and ſcorned, and through the commotions and aſſaults which he raiſes, the ſacred Communion is not to be omitted.

3 Oftentimes alſo much ſollicitude to obtaine devotion, and a certaine anxiety to make our confeſſion hinders us. Doe according

to

to the counsell of [a] wise men, and put away all anxiety and scruple, for it hinders the grace of God, and destroyes devotion of minde. For some small tribulation or vexation leave not the Communion, but goe, confesse sooner, and willingly forgive others what offences soever they have committed against thee, and if thou hast offended any, humbly crave pardon, and God will willingly forgive thee.

4 What availes it to dilay confession a long time, or to deferre the holy Communion? Purge thy selfe with speed, spit out the venome presently, make hast to take a remedy; [b] and thou shalt finde it better then if thou didst long time deferre it. If thou omit it to day for this cause, to morrow perhaps a greater will fall out, and so thou mayest

a Prov. 13. b Math. 5.

mayeſt be hindered a long time from Communion, and become more unfit. Stirre up thy ſelfe, and ſhake of all heavineſſe, and ſlouth with the greateſt force and ſpeed thou canſt, ſince it profits nothing to continue long in diſquietneſſe, and trouble of minde; and for dayly impediments, to ſequeſter thy ſelfe from the Sacraments. Yea it very much endamages to deferre Communion long, for it is wont to breed a greivous dulneſſe. Alas! ſome cold and diſſolute people doe willingly dilay their confeſſion, and doe therefore deſire to deferre the ſacred Communion, leaſt they ſhould be bound to a greater watch over themſelves.

5 Alas! how little charity and weake devotion have they who ſo eaſily put by the ſacred Communion? How happy is he, and gratefull to God, who ſo orders his life, and

and keepes his conſcience in ſuch purity, that he may be ready and affected to cõmunicate every day, if it were lawfull for him, & might be done without note? If ſometimes any abſtaine for humility ſake, or by reaſon of ſome lawfull impediment, he is to be commended for his reverence. But if ſlouth be the cauſe, he muſt ſtirre himſelfe up and doe what lies in him, and God will further his deſire for his good will, which God does cheifly reſpect.

6 And when he is lawfully hindered, he ſhall have alwayes a good will and pious intention to communicate, and thereby he ſhall not want the fruit of the Sacrament. For any devout perſon may every day and houre profitably, and without let, receive Chriſt ſpiritually; and yet on certaine dayes, & at the time appointed, he ought to

to receive ſacramentally with affection and reverence the Body of his Redeemer, and [a] rather ſeeke the honour and glory of God then his owne comfort For he communicates myſtically, and is inviſibly fed as often as he devoutly calls to minde the myſtery of the Incarnation and Paſſion of Chriſt, and is inflamed with his love.

7 He that prepares not himſelfe but when a feaſt drawes neare, or when cuſtome compells him, ſhall be often unprepared Bleſſed is he who offers himſelfe up as an holocauſt to our Lord, as often as he does celebrate or communicate. Be not too long or too ſhort in ſaying Maſſe, but obſerve the good common manner of thoſe with whom thou liveſt. Thou oughteſt not to be tedious and troubleſome to others; but keepe the common courſe

[a] 1. Cor. 111

course according to the institution of Superiors; and rather frame thy selfe to the profit of others, then to thine owne devotion, or desire.

CHAP. XI.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scripture are most necessary to a faithfull soule.

O Most sweete Lord Jesu! how great is the delight of a devout soule that feastes with thee in thy Banquet, where there is no other meate offered to be eaten then thy selfe her onely beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart. And truely it would be delightfull to me to powre forth teares with an intime affection in thy presence, and with devout a Magdalene to wash thy feete with teares. But where

a Luke 7.

where is this devotion? where is ſo plentifull ſhedding of holy teares? certainly in the ſight of thee and thy holy Angels my whole heart ſhould be inflamed and diſſolve into teares for joy, ſince I enjoy thee in the Sacrament truely preſent, though hidden under another forme.

2 For to behold thee in thine owne divine brightneſſe, mine eyes would not be able to endure it, neither could the whole world ſubſiſt in the cleare glory of thy Majeſty. In this therefore thou provideſt for my weakneſſe, that thou covereſt thy ſelfe under the Sacrament. I truely have and adore him, whom the Angels adore in heaven; but I for the preſent time in faith, they in his proper forme without ſhadow: I muſt be content with the light of true faith, and to walke therein till the day of ever-

everlasting brightnesse breake forth, and the shadowes of figure passe away. [a] *But when that shall come which is perfect, the use of Sacraments shall cease:* for the blessed in the celestiall glory need not the remedy of Sacraments, but rejoyce without end in the presence of God, beholding his glory face to face, & being transformed through light of glory into the light of the Abissal Deity, they taste the Word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaines for ever.

3 Mindfull of these wonderfull things even all spirituall comfort becomes tedious unto me. For as long as I behold not my Lord openly in his glory, I make no account of whatsoever I see or heare in this life. Thou art my witnesse, God, that nothing can comfort

a 1 Cor. 13.

me, or any creature give me rest, but thou, my God, whom I desire eternally to contemplate. But this is not possible while I remaine in this mortall life. I must therefore frame my selfe to much patience, and submit my selfe to thee in all my desires. For thy Saints also who now [a] rejoyce with thee, ô Lord, in the kingdome of heaven; whilest they lived, expected in faith and great patience the coming of thy glory. What they beleived, I beleive; what they hoped for, I hope for; to the place they are already arrived, I trust I shall arrive through thy grace. In the meane time I will goe forward in faith, strengthened by the example of the Saints. I have moreover holy bookes for my comfort and guide of my life; and above all these thy most sacred Body for a singular remedy, and refuge.

a Heb. 10. and 11.

4 Two things indeed I perceive very neceſſary for me in this life, without which this miſerable life would be inſupportable to me. During the ſpace of my impriſonment in this body, I acknowledge my ſelfe to ſtand in need of two things, to wit, food, and light. Thou haſt therefore [a] given unto me weake creature thy ſacred Body, for the refection of my ſoule and body; [b] *and haſt ſet thy Word as a light unto my feete.* Without theſe two I cannot well live: for the Word of God is the light of my ſoule, and thy Sacrament the bread of life. Theſe may be called two tables alſo ſet on the one ſide, and the other in the ſtore houſe of the holy Church. One is the table of the holy Altar, containing the ſacred Bread, that is, the pretious Body of Chriſt. The other is of

[a] Iohn 6. [b] Pſal. 118.

divine Law, containing holy doctrine, teaching the true faith, and leading certainly to the part of the [a] Temple within the veile where the Holy of Holies are. [b] Thanks be to thee, ô Lord Jesus, light of everlasting light for the table of holy doctrine, at which thou serveſt us by thy servants the Prophets, and Apostles, and other Doctors.

5 Thanks be to thee, Creator and Redeemer of man, who to manifeſt thy charity to the whole world haſt prepared a great Supper, in which not the typpicall Lambe, [c] but thine owne moſt sacred Body and Blood is offered to be eaten, rejoycing all the faithfull with thy sacred Banquet, and inebriating them with the cup of salvation, in which are all the celeſtiall delights; and the holy Angels

a, Pſal. 22. b Heb. 9. and 13. c Luk. 14. Iohn 16. Pſal. 22. Wiſd. 16.

gels doe feast with us, but with a more happy sweetnesse.

6 O how great and honourable is the office of Priesthood, to whom is granted with sacred words to consecrate the Lord of Majesty, with their lips to blesse him, with their hands to hold him, with their owne mouth to receive him, and to administer him to others! O how cleane ought those hands to be! How pure that mouth! how holy the body! how unspotted the heart of the Priest into whom the Author of purity so often enters! Nothing but holy, no word but chast and profitable ought to proceed from the mouth of the Priest, who so often receives the Sacrament of Christ.

7 Simple and chast ought his eyes to be, which are wont to behold the Body of Christ; the hands pure and lifted up to heaven, that

uſe to handle the Creator of heaven and earth. Unto Prieſts it is ſpecially ſaid in the Law: [a] *Be you holy, for that I the Lord God am holy.*

8 Let thy grace, almighty God, aſſiſt us, that we, who have undertaken the office of Prieſthood, may ſerve thee worthily and devoutly, in all purity and with a good conſcience; and though we cannot live in ſo great innocency as we ought to doe; grant us notwithſtanding in due manner to bewaile the ſinnes which we have committed, and in the purpoſe of humility and a good will, to ſerve thee hereafter with more fervour.

a Lev. 19. and 20.

CHAP. XII.

That he who is to communicate ought to prepare himſelfe with great diligence for Chriſt.

1 I Am the Lover of purity, and Giver of ſanctity: I ſeeke a pure

pure [a] heart, and there is the place of my rest [b] *Make ready a great chamber adorned, and I will make with thee my Pasch, with my disciples.* If thou wilt have me come unto thee, and remaine with thee, purge the old leaven, and make cleane the dwelling of thy heart. Shut out the whole world, and all tumults of vices. [c] *Sit like a sparrow solitary upon the house top,* [d] *and thinke of thy excesses in the bitternesse of thy soule.* For every lover prepares the best and faireſt roome for his beloved, and hereby is knowne the affection of him that entertaines his beloved.

2 Knowe thou notwithstanding that the worth of no action of thine is able to make this preparation sufficient, though thou shouldest prepare thy selfe a whole yeare together, and shouldest thinke of

a Mal 23 b Math 5. Mark 14 Luk 22. c 1. Cor 5. d Exod 24

nothing elſe. But of my mercy and graee onely thou art ſuffered to come to my Table like a beggar invited to dinner to a rich man, and he hath nothing elſe to returne him for his benefits, but to humble himſelfe, and give him thanks. Doe what lies in thee, and doe it diligently, not for cuſtome, not for neceſſity, but with feare, and reverence, and affection receive the Body of thy beloved Lord God, who vouchſafes to come unto thee. I am he that hath called thee, I have commanded it to be done, I will ſupply what is wanting in thee; come and receive me.

3 When I beſtowe the grace of devotion on thee, give thankes to thy God, not becauſe thou art worthy, but becauſe I have had mercy on thee. If thou have it not, but rather feele thy ſelfe dry, continue in prayer, ſigh and knocke,

ke, and I give not over untill thou deſerve to receive ſome crumme or droppe of ſaving grace. Thou haſt need of me, not I of thee; neither doeſt thou come to ſanctifie me, but I come to ſanctifie thee, and make thee better. Thou comeſt that thou mayeſt be ſanctified by me, and united to me, that thou mayeſt receive new grace, and be ſtirred up anew to amendment. Doe not neglect this grace, ever prepare thy heart with all diligence, and receive thy Beloved into thy ſoule.

4 And thou muſt not onely prepare thy ſelfe to devotion before Communion, but carefully alſo conſerve thy ſelfe therein, after thou haſt received the Sacrament. For a carefull guard of thy ſelfe after is no leſſe exacted, then devout preparation before; ſince a good guard after, is the beſt preparation

againe for obtaining of greater grace For one becomes very much indiſpoſed thereby, if he be preſently too much powred forth to exteriour comforts [a] Beware of much talke, remaine in ſome ſecret place, and enjoy thy God; ſince thou haſt him whom all the world cannot take from thee. I am he to whom thou oughteſt to give thy ſelfe wholy, that thou mayeſt hereafter live not in thy ſelfe, but in me without all ſollicitude.

a Prov. 10.

CHAP. XIII.

That a devout ſoule ought to deſire with all her heart, to be united with Chriſt in the Sacrament.

1 WHo will grant me this, ô Lord, that I may find thee alone, and open my whole heart unto thee; and enjoy thee as my ſoule deſires; and that no man may

may now looke upon me, or any creature move or respect me? [a] But thou alone may speake unto me, and I unto thee, [b] as the beloved is wont to speake unto the beloved, and a freind to banquet with his freind. This I pray for, this I desire that I may be wholy united to thee, and may withdraw my heart from all created things; and more and more by sacred Communion, and often celebrating, learne to taste of heavenly and everlasting things. Ah, my God! when shall I be wholy united and absorpt by thee, and altogether forgetfull of my selfe? [c] Thou in me, and I in thee, and so grant us both to continue in one.

2. [d] Thou art truly my Beloved chosen amongst thousands, in whom my soule hath taken pleasure to dwell all the dayes of her life,

a Exod. 33. b Cant. 8. c John 15. d Cant. 5. 7.

life. Thou art truly my Pacifier, in whom is the greateſt peace, and true reſt; without whom is labour, and ſorrow, and infinite miſery. [a] Thou art truly a hidden God, and thy counſell is not with the wicked, for thy converſation is with the humble and ſimple. O how [b] ſweete is thy Spirit, ô Lord! who to the end thou mighteſt ſhew thy ſweetneſſe towards thy [c] children, vouchſafeſt to feed them with the moſt ſweete bread which deſcends from heaven. There is ſurely no other Nation ſo great which hath God approaching unto it, as thou, ô God, art preſent to all thy faithfull, to whom for their dayly comfort, and for the lifting up of their hearts into heaven, thou giveſt thy ſelfe to be eaten, and enjoyed.

3. For what other Nation is there ſo

a Prov. 13. b Wiſd. 12. c Deut. 4.

so famous, as the Christian people? Or what creature under heaven so beloved, as a devout soule, into whom God enters, that he may feed her with his glorious flesh? O ineffable grace! ô admirable favour! ô infinite love singularly bestowed upon man![a] But what shall I give unto our Lord in returne of this grace, for so high a charity? There is nothing more gratefull that I am able to give, then to bestow my heart entirely upon my God, and to unite it intimely to him. Then shall all my interiour rejoyce when my soule shall be perfectly united unto God. Then he will say to me, If thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And I will answere to his owne selfe. Vouchsafe, ô Lord, to remaine with me, and I will willingly be with thee. This is my whole

[a] Psal. 115.

whole desire, that my heart may be united unto thee.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the fervent desire of some devout persons to the Body of Christ.

1 [a] O *How great is the store of thy sweetnesse, ô Lord, which thou hast hidden for those who feare thee!* When I remember some devout persons who come unto thy Sacrament, ô Lord, with very great devotion and affection: I am then often confounded in my selfe, and blush because I come so tepidly and coldly to thy Altar, and to thy Table of holy Communion; because I remaine so dry and without affection of heart, that I am not wholy inflamed in the presence of thee, my God, nor so earnestly drawne and moved as many devout persons have beene, who out of

[a] Psal. 30.

of a vehement desire of Communion, and a feeling love of heart could not withhold themselves from weeping; but with desire both of soule and body, they even from the fund of the heart longed after thee, ô God, the living Fountaine, being not otherwise able to temper or satiate their hunger, but by receiving thy Body with all joy and spirituall greedinesse.

2 O true ardent faith of theirs, being a probable argument of thy sacred presence. For these truely knowe their owne Lord in the breaking of Bread, whose hearts so vehemently burne within them, whilest a Jesus walkes with them. Such desire and devotion, such vehement love is oftentimes farre from me. Be propitious unto me, good, sweete, and benigne Jesu, and grant thy poore beggar may at

a Luke 24.

at leaſt ſometimes feele in the ſacred Communion a little cordiall deſire of thy love, that my faith may be more ſtrengthened, hope in thy goodneſſe increaſed, and charity once perfectly inflamed, and taſting heavenly Manna, may never decay.

3 Thy mercy nevertheleſſe is able to give me even the grace I deſire, and to viſite me in thy bounteous clemency with the ſpirit of fervour, when it ſhall pleaſe thee. For though I burne not with ſo great a deſire as thoſe who are ſo ſpecially devoted to thee, yet notwithſtanding through thy grace I deſire to have this great inflamed deſire, praying and craving that I may participate with all ſuch thy fervent lovers, and be numbred among them in their holy company.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility and deniall of our selves.

1. THou oughtest to seeke the grace of devotion instantly, earnestly to aske it, patiently and confidently to expect it, thankfully to receive it, humbly to keepe it, diligently to worke with it, and to commit the time and manner of the supernaturall visitation to God, till he please to come. Thou oughtest cheifly to humble thy selfe when thou feelest inwardly little or no devotion, and yet not be dejected, nor greive inordinatly for it. God gives often in a short moment that which he hath long time denied: he gives sometimes in the end that which in the beginning of prayer he desired to grant.

2 If grace ſhould be alwayes preſently given, and at hand ever with a wiſh, it could not well be endured by a weake man. The grace therefore of devotion is to be expected with good hope, and humble patience: yet impute to thy ſelfe, and thy ſinnes, what is not given thee, or when it is ſecretly taken from thee. It is a ſmall matter ſometimes that hinders and hides grace from us, if it be to be called ſmall, and not rather a great matter that hinders ſo great a good. And if thou remove this, be it great or little, and perfectly overcome it, thou ſhalt have thy deſire.

3 For as ſoone as thou giveſt thy ſelfe with all thy heart to God, and ſeekeſt not this or that for thy owne pleaſure and will, but entirely ſettleſt thy ſelfe in him; thou ſhalt finde thy ſelfe united and quiet: for nothing will taſte ſo well,

well, and please thee so much, as the good pleasure of the divine will. Whosoever therefore with a simple heart directs his intention to God, and purges himself from all inordinate love, or dislike of any creature, shall be most fit to receive grace, and worthy of the gift of devotion. For our Lord bestowes his blessing there where he finds empty vessels: and how much more perfectly one renounces base things, and dyes more to himself through contempt of himself, so much more speedily grace comes, and enters more plentifully, and elevates higher a free heart.

4 Then [a] shall he see, abound, and wonder, and his heart shall be dilated in him, because the hand of our Lord is with him, and he hath put himself into his hands for

a Psal. 6.

ever. Behold ſo ſhall the man be bleſſed who ſeekes God with his whole heart, and takes not his ſoule in vaine. This man deſerves great grace of divine union in receiving the holy Euchariſt, ſince he regards not his owne devotion and comfort, but the honour and glory of God.

CHAP. XVI.

That We ought to manifeſt our neceſſities to Chriſt, and crave his grace.

1 O Moſt ſweete and loving Lord, whom now I deſire to receive devoutly; thou knoweſt my infirmity and neceſſity which I ſuffer, with how great evils and ſinnes I am oppreſſed, how often I am greived, tempted, troubled, and defiled. I come unto thee for remedy, I crave of thee comfort and eaſe. I ſpeake to him that knowes all things, to whom all my interiour

riour is manifeſt, and who can onely perfectly comfort and helpe me. Thou knoweſt what they are whereof above all things I ſtand in need, and how poore I am in vertues.

2 Behold I ſtand before thee poore and naked, calling for grace, and craving mercy: refreſh thy hungry beggar, give heate to my coldneſſe with the fire of thy love, give light to my blindneſſe with the brightneſſe of thy preſence. Turne all earthly things unto me into bitterneſſe, all things greivous and contrary into patience, all baſe and created things into contempt and oblivion. Lift up my heart unto thee into heaven, and ſuffer me not to wander upon earth. Be thou onely ſweete and delightſome unto me from henceforth for ever more. For thou onely art my meate and my drinke,

my love and my joy, my delight and all my good.

3 O that with thy preſence thou wouldeſt wholy inflame, burne, and change me into thee; [a] that I might be made one ſpirit with thee through the grace of interne union, and the melting of burning love! Suffer me not to goe from the hungry and dry; but deale mercifully with me, as thou haſt oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints. What mervaile if I ſhould be wholy inflamed by thee, and dye to my ſelfe, ſince thou art fire alwayes burning and never decaying, love purifying the heart and enlightening the underſtanding?

a 2 Cor. 6

CHAP. XVII.

Of the fervent love and vehement affection to receive Chriſt.

1 WIth great devotion and burning love, with all fervour

fervour of affection of heart, I desire to receive thee ô Lord as many Saints and devout persons have desired in receiving thee, who were most pleasing to thee through holinesse of life, and most ardent devotion. O my God, my everlasting love, my whole good, my happinesse without end! I would gladly receive thee with the most vehement desire, and worthy reverence that any of the Saints ever had, or could feele.

2. And though I am unworthy to have all those feelings of devotion, yet I offer unto thee the whole affection of my heart, as if I alone had all those most gratefully inflamed desires. Yea whatsoever also a devout minde can conceive and desire, all that with most high reverence and inward affection I present and offer unto thee. I desire to reserve nothing to my selfe,

but freely and moſt willingly to ſacrifice my ſelfe & all mine unto thee. My Lord God, my Creator, & my Redeemer, I deſire to receive thee this day with ſuch affection, reverence, praiſe, and honour; with ſuch gratitude, worthineſſe, and love; with ſuch faith, hope, and purity; as thy moſt bleſſed Mother the glorious Virgin Mary received and deſired thee; when ſhe humbly and devoutly anſwered the Angel, who declared unto her the myſtery of thy Incarnation, ſaying, [a] *Behold the handmaid of our Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy Word.*

3 And as thy bleſſed forerunner, the moſt excellent amongſt the Saints, [b] John the Baptiſt leaped cheerfully with joy of the holy Ghoſt, whileſt he was yet ſhut up in his mothers wombe. And afterwards ſeeing Jeſus walking among men,

a Luke 1. b Luke 1.

men, humbling himself very much, said with devout affection, [a] As the freind of the Bridegrome that stands and hears him, rejoyces with joy, for the voice of the Bridegrome. So wish I also to be inflamed with holy desires, and to offer my selfe up to thee with my whole heart. And therefore I offer and present unto thee the jubilations, ardent affections, mentall excesses, and supernaturall illuminations, and heavenly visions of all devout hearts, with all the vertues and praises celebrated, and to be celebrated by all creatures in heaven and earth, for my selfe and all such as are commended to my prayers, that by all thou mayest be worthily praised and glorified for ever.

4 Receive my affections, ô my Lord God, and desires of infinite praise and immense benediction,

a Iohn 3.

which are due to thee according to the measure of thy unspeakable greatnesse. These I yeeld, and desire to yeeld to thee every day and moment, and doe intreate and invite all the heavenly spirits, and all thy faithfull, with prayers and affections to give thee thankes and praises together with me.

5 Let all people, tribes, and tongues praise thee, and with high jubilation and ardent devotion [a] magnifie thy holy and mellifluous Name; and let all who reverently and devoutly celebrate thy most high Sacrament, and receive it with full faith, deserve to finde grace and mercy at thy hands, and pray humbly for me sinfull creature. And when they shall have obtained their desired devotion and joyfull union, and shall depart from the sacred heavenly Table well com-

[a] Psal. 116.

comforted, and marvellously refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poore and needy soule.

CHAP. XVIII.

That a man be not a curious searcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Christ, submitting his sense unto faith.

1 THou oughtest to beware of curious & unprofitable searching into this most profound Sacrament, if thou wilt not sinck into the depth of doubt. [a] He that is a searcher of Majesty, shall be oppressed by glory. God is able to worke more then man can understand. A pious and humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, so he be alwayes ready to be taught, and doe endeavour to walke in the sound pathes of the ancient Fathers doctrine.

a Prov. 25.

2 Bleſſed is that ſimplicity, that forſakes the difficult wayes of queſtions, and goes on in the plaine and aſſured path of Gods commandments. Many have loſt devotion, whileſt they would ſearch after high things. Faith and ſincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of underſtanding, nor the depth of the myſteries of God. If thou doeſt not underſtand, or conceive thoſe things that are under thee, how ſhalt thou be able to comprehend thoſe that are above thee? Submit thy ſelfe to God, and let thy ſenſe be ſubject to faith, and the light of knowledge ſhall be given thee in that degree, as ſhall be profitable and neceſſary for thee.

3 Some are greivouſly tempted about faith, and the Sacrament, but that is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the enemy. Doe not regard nor diſpute with thy thoughts,

thoughts, neither doe thou give answere to the doubts moved by the enemy, but beleive the words of God, beleive his Saints and Prophets, and the wicked serpent will flye from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the servant of God to suffer such things. For he tempts not infidels and sinners, whom he already securely possesses, but he sundry wayes tempts and vexes the faithfull and devout.

4 [a] Goe forward therefore with a sincere and undoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with unfaigned reverence. And whatsoever thou art not able to understand, commit securely to Almighty God God deceives thee not: he is deceived that trusts too much to himselfe. God walkes with the simple, reveales himselfe to the humble, gives understanding to little

[a] Psal. 18. Math. 14.

little ones, openes the ſenſe of pure mindes, and hides grace from the curious and proude. Humane reaſon is weake and may be deceived, but true faith cannot be deceived.

5 All reaſon and naturall ſearch ought to followe faith, not to goe before it, nor impugne it. For faith and love doe cheifly excell, and worke in a hidden manner in this moſt bleſſed and excellent Sacrament God, who is everlaſting, and of infinite power, does great and inſcrutable things in heaven, and in earth, and there is no ſearching of his wonderfull workes. If the workes of God were ſuch, as might be eaſily comprehended by humane reaſon, they were not to be called wonderfull and unſpeakable.

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